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Easy Touch-Style Bassics

The Rapid Route to ‘Rhythm Bass’ and more

An original method for rapid learning of two-handed tapping on electric bass guitar*[1] and megatar*[2]-type instruments

by Henri DuPont and Traktor Topaz

MOBIUS MEGATAR, LTD.

*[1] electric bass guitar must have six to eight strings to effectively utilize the method of play presented in this instructional book.

*[2] megatar, *adjective* An instrument designed for two-handed touch-style play with one group of strings for bass and another group of strings for melody.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

This publication is designed to provide an easy and accessible method for playing the 'touch-style' or 'two-handed tapping' method on amplified electric fretted instruments such as guitar or bass or the 'megatar' type instruments which have two groups of strings on one fretboard. This method is designed specifically for instruments which have eight or more strings, and can only be adapted to instruments with lesser numbers of strings by means of diligent effort on the part of the student. This method is provided 'as-is' and is believed to be a reliable method providing musical results in typical musicians, and providing comparatively rapid advancement in mastering useful and musical technique. However, the best results will probably be attained when this material is delivered in combination with personalized and professional instruction. Mobius Megatar and associated music dealers assume no liability for whatever results or lack of results as are obtained by the student. We urge the student wherever possible to seek the assistance of competent music instructors.

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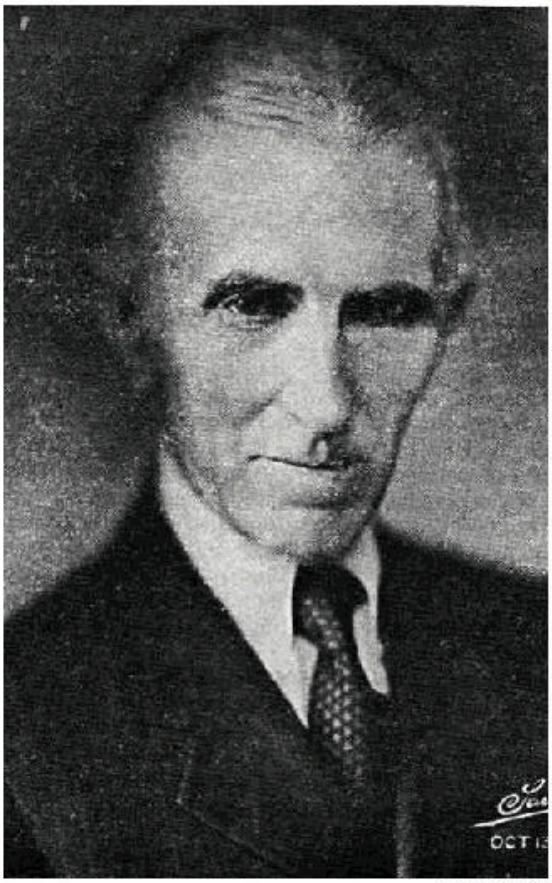
Dedication



October 13, 1933

Nicola Tesla — Born Croatia 1856, Died 1943 in the United States, Studied physics and math at Graz Polytecnic, and philosophy at University of Prague. Worked as an electrical engineer in Hungary, France, and Germany. In 1888 his discovery that a magnetic field could be made to rotate using coils in a new way made possible the development of the AC (alternating current) induction motor, a device using no brushes which was previously considered impossible. This device made the universal transmission of electricity possible.

Tesla had emigrated to the United States in 1884, initially working for Thomas Edison, and later becoming a rival. Edison advocated DC (direct current) transmission of electricity, which didn't work very well. After heated competition, Tesla was commissioned to design the AC generators installed at Niagara Falls. George Westinghouse purchased the patents to Tesla's induction motor, and made them the basis for the Westinghouse power system, which still underlies the modern electrical power system on our planet.

Tesla did early research on wireless communication, and devised systems which anticipated radio, fax machines, radar, radio-guided vehicles and aircraft. The inventor of the 'Tesla Coil', as well as sourceless illumination, and wireless transmission of power, which inventions have been lost.

But most importantly for us, he invented the machines which gave the world electricity. Electricity is the primary enabling technology which gives us our present world. And for us musicians, electricity makes possible amplifiers and electric guitars. And electric guitars make possible two-handed tapping on strings. So we honor Nicola Tesla. He gave us our world.

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Acknowledgements

Author Henri DuPont wishes to say ...

It is very simple. I thank the Professor Beauchamp for encouragement of the ragamuffin downstairs, and I thank Madame Dun for her tender courtesies.

The Sorbonne was entirely right to throw me out, and I apologize to Rene and all the gentle people at Le Monde. Even the dire predictions of Fr. Dain, when my mother escaped to Zaire, were not far off. It seems that you were right after all. I can blame only the wine, and my impatient nature.

I thank Josef in Sao Paulo, who taught me the true Tumbao as it was of old.

I thank Eric Satie. Mr. Satie, as perhaps is well known, had a great early success and it convinced him that he should study music. And afterwards he lamented that, knowing too much, he could no longer write the simple compositions so captivating as in his youth and his ignorance.

I pray God that we may all remain ignorant and creative, in the midst of our learning.

Author Traktor Topaz wishes to say ...

When you hear a man describing himself as a ‘self-made’ man, you’re listening to a guy who’s forgotten all the people who have helped him along the way. The same could be said for this book and the ‘Bookmark System’ which it presents, and the same could be said for the musical instrument designed and marketed by our company, Mobius Megatar.

I am grateful to Roy Lee Brooks, the band teacher in Henrietta, Texas, who encouraged me to take up rudimental snare drum in 1955. I am grateful for band leader Howard Raeke, who insisted that even the drum section study the music theory book. I thank Emmory Whipple, rudimental champ, for the experience of sustained practice, so that one day I realized that my hands knew the way, and like a recording engineer in a control booth, I was somehow removed, just listening and adjusting.

I’m grateful to Peter Paul and Mary for making me want to learn guitar to torment my fellows with folk songs, grateful to John Hill for selling me his Stratocaster, grateful to Howling Wolf and Little Walter, grateful to Dave Feldman, who taught me ‘Blues Harmonica for the Musical Idiot’ from xeroxed sheets at ‘Chickens That Sing Music’ music store in San Francisco’s Haight Ashbury.

I’m grateful to the third West Coast Computer Faire in Moscone Center, where I heard my first synthesizer, which drew me across the floor in search of the sound. I’m grateful to Bernie Krause, who sold me my first synthesizer, and to that fellow who made the first tapping instrument I ever tried. I’m grateful to Frank Jolliffe, my mentor and friend, who taught me how to play, and to Sheet Music Magazine (Easy Piano Version) for reading material, and to theory guru Jim Grantham who made guide tones and folded chords abundantly clear.

I also must acknowledge learning how to study (and thus how to teach) from the Scientology ‘study materials,’ and I must thank Bandler and Grinder and Milton Ericson for insights of how the mind works to grasp the world. Even my university training (psychology and engineering) has been helpful!

I thank Adrienne Gallant, for support, tolerance, and love.

This book contains bits of rudimental snare-drumming from Henrietta Texas, bits of the blues, bits of my teachers and instructors and fellow students, and bits of my studies of the mind. Without these people and these diverse learnings, the amalgam and synthesis which is the Bookmark System could not have been conceived nor written.

Thank you all.

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Preface

Many years ago, Traktor Topaz appeared in a jazz band class which I was teaching. He was carrying a touch-style instrument and announced that he wanted to be the bass player. I had never seen such an instrument and so had my doubts, but I welcomed him to the class and he did a great job as bass player. We ended up featuring him on one song where he played bass and melody at the same time. This was my introduction to touch-style instruments.

I am very proud of my former student who has become a fine musician, inventor, and teacher himself.

This book, Easy Touch-Style Bassics, gives a great introduction to touch-style playing. Bass players learning touch-style can especially benefit from this instruction because of the way that scales and chords are mapped out on the fingerboard. In a very clear fashion, the authors give a basic introduction to playing melodies (based on scales) and harmony (based on chords). I'm already looking forward to volume II of this method.

The idea of teaching both hands to do the same thing helps the student learn the exercises quickly, and learning chords as part of progressions gives immediate practical use to the material in this book.

The method of showing a group of chords which can be played in one position is very logical and helps the student avoid losing his or her place on a many-stringed and many-fretted instrument. This is a more pianistic approach than most other stringed-instrument methods, which makes the theory and harmony lessons very clear and accessible to students of any level.

People playing touch-style instruments may come from a background of playing the bass, playing the guitar, playing some other instrument, or be completely new to music. This book will be perfectly clear and accessible to anyone from any of these categories.

I wish all prospective touch-style players well on their adventure. In addition, I think that those of you who have purchased a Mobius Megatar touch-style bass will find that you have in your hands an ideal instrument to apply these lessons.

Jeremy Cohen
Berkeley, CA
September, 2000

Jeremy Cohen is a professional bassist with over 35 years experience in all types of music, and a nationally-known bass instructor. Co-founder of the band Jazz Express, he composed half of the songs on its debut album. His performances around the San Francisco Bay Area include the musical "Beach Blanket Babylon", the bands City Lights and Adama, and The S.F. 49ers Big Band. He has taught at the National Guitar Summer Workshop, and since 1982 has been a staff-member at The Blue Bear School of American Music in San Francisco , giving clinics, and teaching classes in bass, music theory, composition, and jazz combo. Former students include Matt Freeman of Rancid and Arion Salazar of Third Eye Blind. Mr. Cohen can be contacted through his website at

http://www.jps.net/jeremy

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Introduction

It's a Problem!

It's a daunting task — to produce a Method Book which is simultaneously useful for new musicians who never held an instrument before and for experienced veterans who can calculate advanced theory in a flash and play the result in real-time studio gigs.

Even though our material is relatively simple, and our goals modest, the core problem is — how to go slow enough and give enough information so the beginner can be rewarded with musical progress, and yet at the same time provide the information concisely for the experienced professional who just wants to get it and go with it.

The problem of "slow enough" versus "concise enough" is compounded by the fact that there are numerous tunings currently in use among touch-style enthusiasts, and there is much to be said for many of these tunings.

There are, in addition, several valid methods of touch-style currently being taught and shared by skillful touch-style teachers. For example, there are valid systems which initially teach the student to move shapes (chords and scales) around the fretboard and other valid systems which teach shapes in one particular position.

There are across-the-string scales, and along-the-string scales, and there are diagonal across-and-along-the-strings scales! And for each of these approaches, coherent and thoughtful players and instructors can be found.

There also exist among skillful touch-style musicians and among guitar- and bass-playing musicians several differences of opinion as to whether it's better learning to use three fingers or four fingers to play scales and chords. Both points of view have logic, good results, and outstanding musicians espousing the position. Some use four fingers on the bass strings, and three fingers on the melody strings, and with well-presented reasons for the approach.

Then there are the students' skills.

Some students can sight-read two clefs in real-time on touch-style instruments. Other musicians of skill, perhaps world-class and studio-caliber, just have skillful ears and can't read standard notation at all. Other students can hum a tune, and once saw a guitar. That's what they come in with, but they want to learn to play and we want to help make it possible.

Reducing Confusion

All humans fall prey to the mental cloud which we call 'being confused.'

What this really means is mentally stumbling around with a lack of clarity and unable to grasp the problem or even to see the problem clearly.

The experience of confusion seems to be inevitably caused by the human attempting to grasp more things at once than the human *can* grasp.

For example, in a tornado, with large and small objects flying through the air so fast you can't keep track, it is hard to know which way to go.

In a similar way, a human approaching a new field often attempts to grasp a large number of new ideas simultaneously. Now a child wouldn't normally make that mistake because the child comes into the situation with one tenet already firmly held in mind. That is, the child comes in knowing that "he doesn't know." He has no expectation for knowing, and so may experience less discomfort. Adults, especially competent adults, are far more likely to think that they 'should' know, especially if they have been exposed to the material in the past.

In this comparison, the child has an emotional advantage, because the child already has One Stable Datum. That is to say, the child has one thing he knows for certain, and all the new stuff can be organized around this one core fact.

If the adult can in fact start with One Stable Datum, the adult can achieve a clarity and lack of confusion as well. For example, if you already read music, you know about the names of notes (A-G) along with their sharps and flats, and you can fit in the new stuff about where these (known) notes fit on a fretboard with your (already known) Stable Data. This can make clear sense of the new stuff without being confusing.

But if the adult comes in without any previous knowledge, then it is up to the presenter to provide a sequence of graspable ideas, each of which is clearly presented, and which can build upon each other so as to grow into the whole of the knowledge which we wish to impart.

Of course, if the adult comes in with previous *confusions* then the presenter must be even more careful about the sequence and clarity of material being presented. Because a human viewing *through* a confusion at a new subject is peering through a glass, darkly.

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How Will We Present Simply?

So what's our big plan to reduce confusion?

Since we wish to reduce confusion for ourselves and for the student, we will first attempt to reduce the number of elements, and then to present slowly and carefully this (relatively) small number of elements.

So what, for example, can we eliminate?

We think we can in general avoid recreating a general music-theory book. Many great theory books already exist, and the information in that subject is vast. Further, many people can play rather well without a lot of theory so we know that lack of lots of theory is not a deadly barrier to learning two-handed touch-style technique.

How will we avoid theory?

Of course, we just cannot completely avoid theory. But we can minimize some of it, as it were presenting selected information carefully so as to side-step having to go off on a theory tangent in order to make sense of the tapping instructions.

Next, we can weave in small doses of necessary theory as we go along, and this will allow us to defer some theory into later books as we expand the subject. The authors have observed that theory by itself is deadly dull to many folks. Only when you can see that theory helps you *play something* does theory get interesting to many of us.

Next, at the expense of annoying the pro musicians who are just studying this book to add a new technique to their existing armory, we'll explain things rather slowly and carefully, with many steps. However, the pros will appreciate that the actual system being transmitted (the 'Bookmark System' which uses a Master Exercise to rapidly obtain musical results) does actually compress into a few graphs and tables, so once you know the meaning of these graphs and tables, a very few pages can express the Master Exercise.

This 'go slow' approach is made more tedious (for authors and students alike) by having to explain the *exact same thing* several times over to allow for folks that have their instruments tuned differently.

So to strike a reasonable balance, we'll cover the three tunings which seem to be most popular and (in our opinion) functional. Many other very interesting tunings exist, but the student advocate of one of these tunings should with diligence be able to translate one of the three we provide into almost any tuning.

Further, we won't repeat the material three times in cases where it seems that presenting it once for one instrument will suffice, and that players of the other instruments can adapt the material on the fly as obvious.

We will almost certainly fail to present material slow enough for some, or quick enough for others. It will be too much theory for some, and not enough for others. This just shows the wonder that is the human race, and the failings of the individual human writer. We've tried our best to present the system so that you can grasp it rapidly and with musical results.

We think the touch-style method of play (either using our system or some other system) is just wonderful. We hope that you come to love it, too.

The Purpose of This Book

We think two-handed touch-style should be better known and enjoyed.

It permits your two hands to play simultaneously, much as can a musician on piano. You can play left-hand chords while playing a melody. Or you can make up a melody with a bassline beneath it. You can read and play Bach Two-Part Inventions. You can play boogie bass with simultaneous rhythmic rock chords.

Will you learn all of that in this book?

No, our goals here are a bit more modest.

By the end of this book, you will be able to play your 8-String Bass (or Megatar or other tapping instrument) by means of bass roots or arpeggiating chords in the bass.

You will also be able to arpeggiate chords in the right hand, or more importantly, you will be able to play very simple chords in a rhythmic manner on top of your bassline.

You *will* have the *basis* for all the above technique, having learned it in a simple and clear system which will enable you to play several touch-style instruments using different tunings.

You'll make rapid progress, and you'll have fun, and what you learn permits you to create musical results from simple elements.

The purpose of this book is to give you a rapid and competent introduction to two-handed touch-style technique so that you can play what we call 'Rhythm Bass' and at the same time give you the groundwork for lots more.

Please Share

We have enjoyed the voyage of creating this book. We hope you enjoy the voyage that is two-handed touch-style.

Music is meant to be shared. If you love what you learn here, please share. Teach somebody.

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How to Learn

Principles of Learning

Most of us crawl from the cradle in a state of rapid learning, so perhaps it's not so odd that we rarely think about 'methods' or 'principles' of learning. Especially during our formative years, we are as immersed in learning as fish are immersed in water.

But the fact is that our early learning is somewhat innate, and somewhat 'monkey see, monkey do' modeling of the other humans around us, and learning a subject such as musical technique is neither innate nor easily copied merely by watching other musicians.

As proof of this statement, we ask you to recall to mind what teenage boys seem to learn from musicians seen on MTV. What do they learn? Hairdos, attitudes, ways of talking and posture and hand gestures. Actual musical skills? Not a lot.

Also, you have probably noticed that some people are better at learning things than other people. Some of that is genetics or aptitude. But some of it is because different people approach learning differently.

In fact, there do exist certain principles of learning. If you follow them you can make more rapid progress than otherwise. Some you may already follow. Others would advantage you greatly to adopt.

Step by Step

Learning occurs in little bursts, with some loss between learning sessions, and a residual accumulation of learning which we then call 'skill.'

Therefore, learning best occurs in a step by step fashion. You just cannot grasp a whole lot at a time (and retain it in any useful fashion). You cannot learn a little and go away for a long time and then come back and learn a little and go away, etc. Because you won't advance.

So if you wish to learn, step one is to COMMIT to regular and ongoing frequent learning steps. In music we normally call this 'practicing.'

If by any chance you are one of those who have in the past been burned (damaged/upset) by the practice of 'practicing,' please realize that done correctly it will neither bore you nor make you feel inept nor uncomfortable. In fact, done in little regular steps, you should feel interested and pleased in that every few days you can see significant progress. That is, every few days you can play something new.

So step one is to COMMIT to regular and frequent practice. It is better to practice 30-45 minutes every single morning than to practice 6 hours every Sunday. You will learn more.

Find your time that you can actually get yourself to the instrument every single day, and stick to it, and as certain as the sun rises, you will be able to play music. It's just a fact —

If you persist, you'll win.

The Proper Gradient

If you try too much too fast, you'll flop. The way that feels is that your head is spinning, the stuff doesn't make much sense, it's hard to do and you don't like it much, either.

If you try too little, it's slow and tedious and little progress is observed. The way that feels is that, yeah yeah yeah, you've heard it already, and you probably have to force yourself go to practice because it's boring you out of your mind.

The correct gradient gives you some new challenge at least every few days, so you have to ask yourself, 'Can I do that?' And you think maybe you can, but you're not quite sure. On the other hand the correct gradient in practice means that 85 to 95 percent of the notes you play are correct with good tone. You don't ever have to wallow in a misery of missed notes or slop around with a bunch of bad-sounding stuff.

Very slightly challenged, and feeling generally confident is how the correct gradient feels.

You can use the feeling as one guideline to attaining the correct gradient — If you feel daunted or overwhelmed or buried in errors, then simplify and slow down. If you feel like it's easy, push it so you have to pay close attention to avoid errors.

One of the greatest gifts which a more experienced musician or teacher can impart is to help you set the proper gradient. If he sees you're buried, he can help you simplify and slow down. If he sees you need more challenge, there's always something more to learn.

Clarity Regarding Words

The concept of confusion is not well understood in our culture. Confusion is not something that is done to us. Confusion is the feeling that accompanies operating our mind in a particularly ineffec-

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tive manner. The basic error is to try to grasp more things at one time that is possible for you. For example, imagine a tornado throwing large and small objects around you faster than you can track — in which direction does safety lie?

The solution to confusion is to reduce the elements, and especially effective is to find *one* major element to track. For example, in that tornado, if you notice that one of the flying things is a large truck, you might concentrate on that one, and then you'd have a clue about which way to go. (True, you might be killed by a flying cow or refrigerator, but you wouldn't feel confused!)

As this applies to learning, one of the deadliest problems of the study of any subject is to fail to grasp the basic words or vocabulary of the subject. For example, suppose you decided to study dogs, and you read a book, and the book warns you to be cautious about the dog's muzzle. Now if you didn't know the meaning of this word, or if you thought it meant something different, such as a part of a rifle, it would be very hard to make sense of that sentence about being cautious about the dog's muzzle! You might think, "Sure I'll be cautious if the dog's carrying a rifle!" but you would feel puzzled.

Some people, if they noticed the puzzlement, would go and find out what that word meant, by using a dictionary or asking somebody. But what about those times when you don't even realize you've become puzzled? Or what about the times you're aware of being puzzled, but you think maybe by reading further it will become clear?

What then happens is that the entire chapter is puzzling, kind of vague and confused. It doesn't become clear at all. If you had a test on that chapter you'd fail.

And after a few chapters like this, the entire subject is vague and confused, and further you don't remember why you started this subject because it's not much fun and you don't even like it!

A few little words? Causing all that mischief?

You bet! Without the key words, then sentences don't quite make sense. Without the sentences, the core ideas and thus the pages don't make sense, and then the chapters don't make sense, and then there are two many things to track, and it's a confusion.

People leave subjects. They leave subjects due to vague and undefined words which they didn't trouble to clarify.

Clarify the words as you go. Make sure you don't go past puzzles. You'll find yourself retaining and understanding material better and easier than ever before.

As you go along, whenever you notice the *feeling* of vagueness, stop! You just went past an undefined word! Find it. It is located at the end of the last part you understood clearly. Then once you've located it, mark it with a pencil and find out what it means.

Doesn't this take more time?

You mean, doesn't it take more time to actually learn the subject than to scan over the subject and then give it up?

Yes, it does take more time.

But then you actually learn the subject, and that was the actual intent, was it not?

Fingers versus 'Thinking About'

A very wise man once said that if you want to learn about tractors, don't try to memorize a thick book about tractors, but instead go get a tractor and try everything out one step at a time.

Music is like that.

True musical learning is about 90% Fingers and Ears, and at most 10% Mind.

If you just try to read this book about how to play, at the end you will not be able to play.

On the other hand, if you correctly use this book as a step-by-step road map, and you actually drive down the road, then you will arrive at the destination! That is, if you'll read a page for a few minutes, and then use your fingers and ears on the instrument for a few hours, you will have actually learned something. You will be able to play.

Learning to play is mostly Fingers and Ears. A good map, like a good teacher, is valuable because they can point the correct direction.

But nearly all of the actual learning occurs in your Fingers and Ears, and only a little bit in your Mind.

Rule-O-Thumb System

This book uses an approach we call 'Rule-O-Thumb.' Most of you know that this means it's pragmatic, based upon what generally works.

That's a good approach because it can be clear and simple, and the process of learning benefits from being clear and simple.

On the other hand, be aware that Rule-O-Thumb is sometimes not totally complete, and the Rule-O-Thumb does not try to encompass everything. That approach is called the Encyclopedia approach, and while it's great for reference books, it's really hard for an actual human to learn 'how-to' from an encyclopedia.

We specifically mention this shortcoming of the Rule-O-Thumb approach because in this book you might read one of our guidelines, and immediately you might think of an exception!

If so, please ask yourself whether the guideline presented is *generally* true. If it's generally true,

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then you can use this rule to learn. If you are already advanced enough to foresee the exceptions, then you're just ahead of the game.

We have intentionally taken a Rule-O-Thumb approach because guys use this approach all the time when showing someone how to do something, and it generally works pretty well.

Most-Direct-Path System

Do you remember in the story about Sleeping Beauty, about how the prince had to find his tortuous way through all the thorns to find the entrance and get some Sleeping Beauty action?

If you were that Prince, wouldn't it be great if there had been a handy 'learning gnome' outside the forest of thorns who would take you around to the correct side and point out the shortest way to get through the thorns?

Wouldn't that be great if you were learning how to play some music and somebody could show you the shortest distance, involving the minimum set of things that would give you the understanding and the fingers to play?

While we cannot with certainty claim to be exactly as wise as that learning gnome, we've tried our best to do just that.

While we're not entirely certain to have found the absolute shortest and most direct route, we do feel certain that we have found *a* direct route, and we've tried to make it both complete and concise.

Rabbit versus Turtle

In a great book called 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,' Suzuki Roshi discusses a kind of parable about the 'Poor Horse.'

He says, in brief, that when you ride the best horse you just think about racing and lean forward, and the horse takes off like a shot.

But, he says, if you're riding an average horse you may need to shout commands and even tap the horse with your quirt to get him to run fast.

And then, he says, if you're riding the poor horse, you may have to strike him repeatedly with the quirt, so that he feels it in his bones, to get him to put out the effort and run.

Then he asks the question: Which horse would you prefer to be?

Suzuki Roshi says that most people who hear the story think that they'd like to be the best horse, or (if they're more humble) at least the average horse. But generally nobody wants to be the poor horse.

However, we would have to agree with Suzuki when he says that *it's not bad to be the poor horse*. For one thing, it might just be where you are starting out, and you have *got* to start from where you are to make any progress because nothing else works.

Secondly, the poor horse actually can improve the most. A world-class pianist might have to work a year to increase his skill 1 percent. The beginning pianist probably increases his skill by more than 100% in that same year.

So, if something is clumsy for you, don't worry if you feel like the poor horse. That's an OK horse to be.

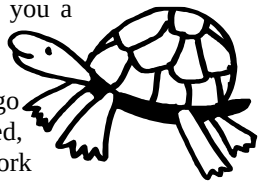
We also like the image of the Rabbit and the Turtle.

The actual fairy story calls them the 'Tortoise and the Hare,' but we're only slightly referring to that story. In the world of learning, there are indeed some students who are Rabbits and able to go rather quickly — they can learn the lesson in a short time and play music using it, they're interested in side trips and can go down side trips and come back in time to keep on the main journey.

Other students are by nature more like Turtles — they need to keep moving steadily on. They make steady progress because they just keep moving forward. They aren't as flashy, and they don't seem to be as quick learners, but they can get there all the same.

We think that either personality can succeed and learn to play music.

The main key to success is to recognize where you are. Are you a Rabbit? Are you a Turtle?



Either one is fine.

But if you're a Turtle, don't go darting down side lanes. Focused, steady progress is what will work for you.

And if you are truly a Rabbit, don't get scattered. Sure, run down the side lane and come back. On the main exercises, you don't need to beat it to death — when you know it and can play it, you've done that part and you can move on. But don't let your speed distract you. Always remember to come back to the main road, so that you actually arrive at the place you started for.

Divergence and Convergence

We have noticed a peculiar phenomenon that often occurs when you learn a new body of knowledge —

As you are new to the subject, it often seems that each new idea or technique is opening up another pathway, as if the information is creating pathways that are expanding and growing outward in new directions — that universe is expanding.

However, after a period of time, as you begin to

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have some grasp of the subject, you begin to notice that some of the new ideas or techniques seem to be *leading back* to something you already know. It's as if the new pathways are beginning to all come back together. That universe is beginning to lead back to some central area.

You could generalize and say that the beginner's new ideas diverge, and the experienced person's new ideas converge.

But of what practical use is this observation?

Just this — As you learn this new area, whenever you notice that some new concept or idea seems to *lead back* to an area that you already know, realize that you're moving into the 'experienced' classification.

It probably also means that, as you learn new material, if you will ponder the new material to see how it might connect with things you already know, it could pay dividends in your understanding.

Inchworm Technique

This is a specific technique that seems to be helpful when learning chord changes in either hand. Since we bass-players and 'rhythm-bass' players often play chord changes, the inchworm technique is handy to know.

As you'll discover, in this particular book the first chord 'progression' you encounter is just two chords. In fact, we call it an 'alternation' rather than a progression, because it doesn't much go anyplace.

However, from there on, you'll notice that chord progressions usually consist of three or more chords in a sequence that has a feeling of 'forward motion.' A song itself can be considered to be one long chord progression of many chords with some sense of forward motion.

As you learn to move your hands and fingers from one chord to the next, you will sometimes discover that moving from one particular chord to some other particular chord often gives you a stumble. For example, perhaps you frequently stumble or hesitate when moving from G7 to CM7.

This stumbling at this particular spot can be a bit persistent as you practice. Because of course, with every stumble, you've practiced the stumble, and your body has a tendency to learn the stumble at just that spot.

Our general suggestion would be to slow down, and that's a good technique.

However, the 'inchworm technique' would be to stop and try playing the two chords *back and forth.* That is, although the chord progression probably does not have CM7 going *to* G7, the path between these two chords is the path between these two chords, and your fingers can learn the motion profitably in either direction.

So even though the chord progression only goes from G7 to CM7, you take a moment and show your fingers how to go back and forth.

Since you've not learned any stumble in the 'reverse' direction, you will find that a few back-and-forths will tend to free your fingers from stumbling faster than just practicing the original direction.

We call it the inchworm technique because it's stopping the forward motion to go back and forth, kind of the way an inchworm moves forward.

When you think about it, it's just common sense. And we think your fingers will confirm the technique as useful.

As with all things musical, try it and see.

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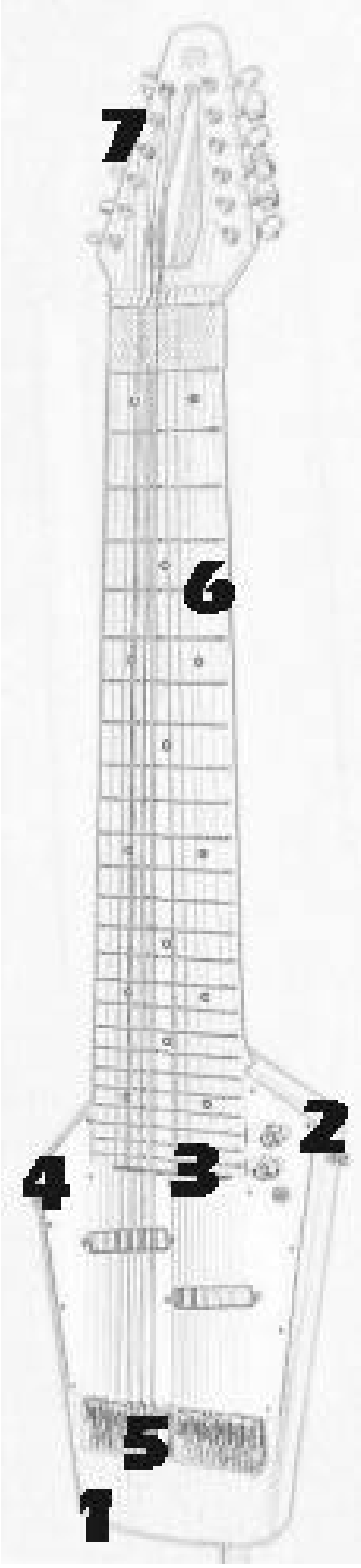
Introducing the Instrument



What Are These 'Touch-Style' Instruments?

Instruments which are especially made for two-handed touch-style play are often called by different names. Sometimes they're called basses and sometimes they're called guitars.

There is no commonly-agreed-upon term for these instruments especially made for two-handed tapping play.

The word 'megatar' was coined by our company, Mobius Megatar, as a generic term for an instrument especially made for two-handed touch-style play, and which has a set of strings for bass and another set of strings for melody.

Although our name 'Mobius Megatar' is our trademark for the specialty tapping basses which we manufacture, we have no objection to people using the single lower-case word 'megatar' as a generic term to refer to such specialty instruments. It's a pretty good word to describe such an instrument, as it comes from 'mega' (meaning 'a lot') and the word 'guitar', and because clearly such an instrument is *more* than a guitar!

Essential Points for a good Tapping Instrument

Whatever you may call your specialty tapping instrument, the key points are —

- It has a lot of strings so you can play very low and very high notes, just as can a piano player.
- It *may* have these strings separated into two groups so that each hand can move around the notes without stepping on the other hand's strings. But an 8-string bass can also serve as a great tapping instrument if properly 'set up.'
- To get a good sound from merely tapping with the fingertips, it must be 'set up' with a low and fluid string action, and usually it needs to have pickups adjusted rather close to the strings.

Pictured — the Mobius Megatar TrueTapper

The TrueTapper shown is a typical specialty tapping bass, with six bass strings and six melody strings.

1. Body — a streamlined design, keeps weight down.
2. Volume and Tone Controls — permits you to separately adjust the loudness and tone of the bass and the melody strings.
3. Dual Truss-Rod Adjusters — allows you to fine tune the fretboard to remain completely flat with the low action which produces the best sound and playability.
4. Pickup Assembly — as shown has one pickup for bass and one for melody, but this is a swappable option. Other pickup assemblies can have multiple pickups under the strings.
5. Fully-Adjustable Bridge — allows fine adjustment of string height, if needed.
6. Special Fret-Markings — similar to standard guitar, but slightly different, helps you relate notes under both hands.
7. Tuners — high-ratio for easy-on-the-fingers tune-up

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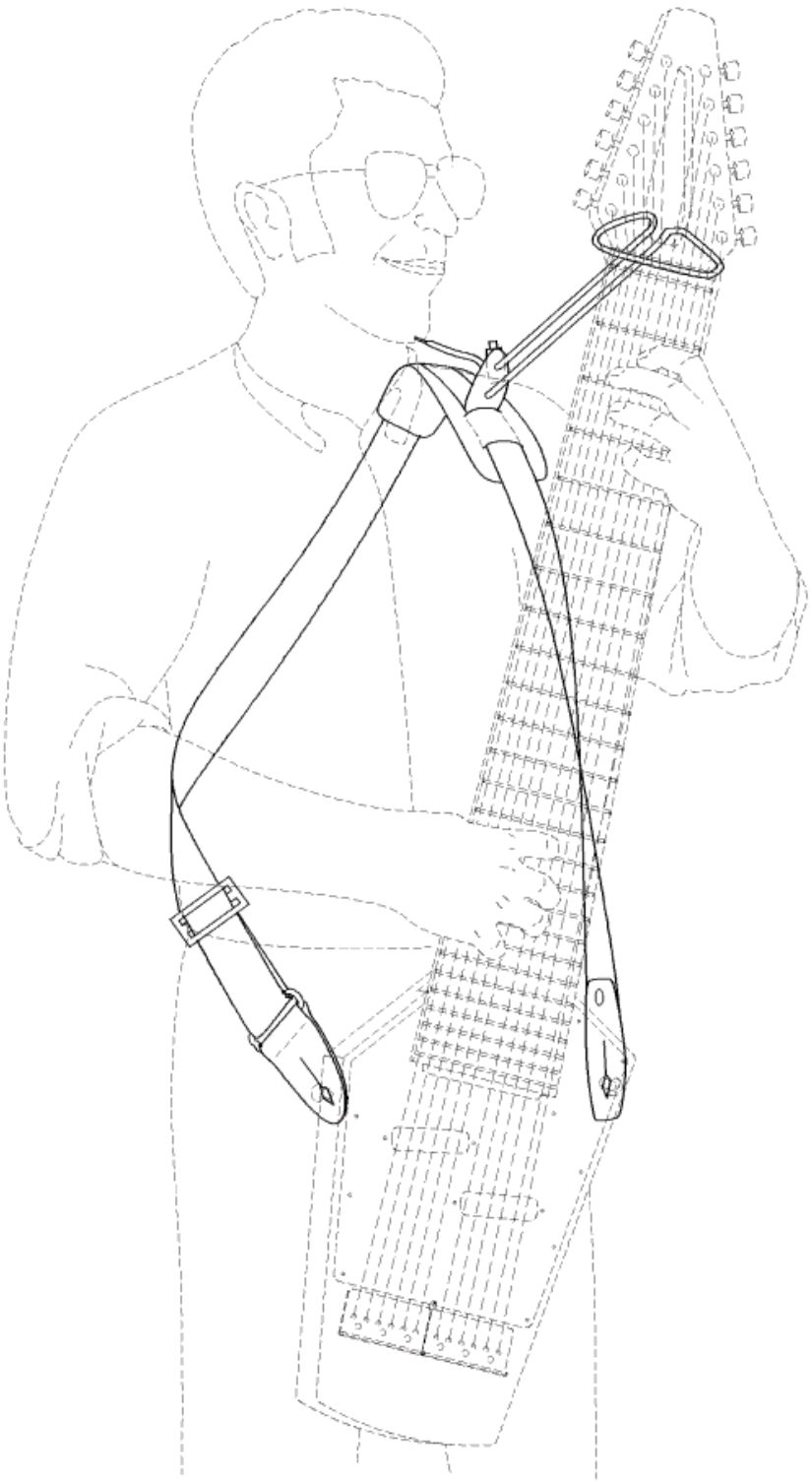

Drawing shows specialty tapping instrument, supported by special strap in correct, upright position. This gives both hands easy access to strings as shown.

How do you Put It On?

When you purchased your tapping instrument, your manufacturer should have provided basic information about how to 'put on' the instrument so as to place it in a reasonable playing position.

Your instrument might be supported by a strap as shown, or it might be supported by a 'belt-hook' device which is affixed to the rear surface of the instrument and which you hook over your belt or your trousers so that your instrument is supported.

There also exist other support devices, including some which will support your instrument when you are playing seated.

The important thing is that you manage to get the instrument supported so that it is comfortable on your body for the duration of the performance, and that the instrument is in a nearly-vertical position as shown.

This vertical position allows both of your hands to 'get at' the strings in an easy manner with minimal bending of the wrists. This keeps your hands in a good playing position, while minimizing fatigue during performance.

Your left hand will be positioned somewhat as shown more or less near the tuners, as you normally play the lower end of the bass strings with your left hand.

Your right hand is normally positioned as shown closer to the instrument's body, as you'll commonly play right-hand melody or harmony notes 'higher up', meaning nearer to the body.

How do you Jack It In?

Somewhere near the volume and tone controls you should find a jack. Many of the specialty tapping instruments have a single 'stereo' jack which jacks into the instrument, and from this extend two separate cords, one carrying the signal from the bass pickups and the other carrying the melody pickups' signal.

This permits you to use different amplifiers or different 'channels' to effect your sound separately if desired.

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Notation

What is Notation?

Notation means 'how musicians make written notes about which notes to play.' That is, notes made about notes played = Notation.

In this introductory book, we were able to avoid dealing with much notation. However, in later books, several types of notation will be used. We mention them now only as an introduction.

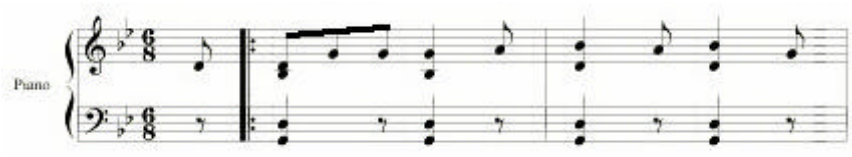
Standard Notation

'Standard Notation' means ordinary sheet music as you have seen before. Although it's a bit cryptic when you first encounter it, the benefit of reading standard notation is that the note symbols indicate the pitch or the specific note to be played but also indicate when it is to be played and how long it is to be held.

There is no information for us guitar and bass players about what finger to use, or which particular fret or which string to play Mr. Note upon.

So Standard Notation is real specific about what is to be accomplished, with no particular clues given about how to accomplish it!

Standard Notation looks like this —



Guitar Tab

'Guitar Tab' means 'Guitar Tablature' which consists of six lines which represent the guitar strings. On these lines are printed numbers which represent a fret number. So if on the first guitar string you see a '12' then you know we're talking about the note found at fret 12 of the first string.

By itself it doesn't tell you what finger to use, nor whether the note is an 'A' or an 'E', nor exactly when to play the note nor how long to hold it.

Guitar tab is often combined with standard notation. That is, you'll see the staves of standard notation (as shown above) and right below those staves you'll see some lines representing the strings of your guitar or bass.

In this combination, each type of notation brings its strength to the picture. The standard notation clearly lets you know what note is to be played, and when to play it, and how long to hold it. And the guitar tablature below indicates precisely on which string and at which fret to play this note.

In this way, an experienced player or teacher can notate exactly how he worked out the execution of notes that were specified in the standard notation. As you'd probably guess, this combination is most commonly seen in instructional material, as it takes up a lot of space. (If you're playing a song live from such 'music', you'll be turning pages a lot before the song is done.)

We will come to guitar tab, as well as standard notation, in following books, but won't have to deal with it in the current book. We bring it up here merely for discussion.

String Graphs

In this book we will use a number of string graphs, which show the strings and frets along a certain section of the fretboard. Then on specific strings at specific frets we can put symbols which stand for our fingers, so that we can know just how to go about fingering the notes there.

There is no indication about when to play the notes nor how long to hold them. But for our learning note-names at certain fretboard positions, this will not be much of a problem as you will see.

Further, the String Graphs can be presented with the Note Names in position rather than the fingering charts, so that you can know which notes fall at a specific string and fret as shown on the Graph.

In fact, that's the way we'll start — by select-

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ing a specific area of the fretboard, and then showing you a small number of notes which occur there, and then how to finger this small number of notes.

Everything else will then evolve from the original String Graphs, for the purpose of learning to play.

Traktor's Finger Symbols

Although some folks use the numbers '1', '2', '3', and '4' to indicate the fingers, we think there are already too many number references involved in musical discussions — for example, measures are referred to by numbers, most chords are referred to by numbers, notes in a scale are referred to by numbers, the musical distance between two notes (the 'interval') is referred to by numbers.

To avoid adding yet another set of numbers, we have chosen instead to use a simple set of geometric symbols. We didn't think this up. You can find lute music from the 14th century using circles and squares and other geometric symbols.

We call our symbols 'Traktor's Finger Symbols,' because author Traktor worked them up.

Each symbol stands for one of your fingers. As you will discover, we don't have to make any differentiation between your left hand and right hand, so the identical symbols stand for either.

● The Circle means the first finger (either hand). Note that the circle has only 'one' point.

▮ The Bar means the second finger. Note that the bar has 'two' ends.

▼ The Down-Triangle means the third finger. Note that the Down-Triangle has 'three' points.

✖ The X means fourth finger (seldom used). Note that the X has 'four' ends.

A chord has a base note called the 'root' and then some harmony notes. In our learning, it is very handy to keep track of that root, and to know which of several notes is the root. So, to show which finger's playing the root, the symbol is shown 'hollow' —

For example: ○ ▯ ▽ or ⊗

We think you'll find this approach very easy.

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Overview of the Books

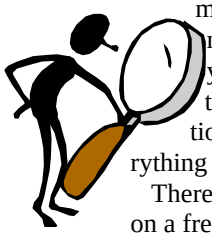
Book 1 -- Easy Touch-Style Bassics

This book is designed to provide a clear introduction to the two-handed tapping technique which we call 'Touch-Style'. The methods given here are not the only possible approach. In fact, these methods may not be the best or the simplest methods. They're just the best methods we know.

Here's what's included in this book ...

You will be shown how to put on an instrument and how to position your hands, so that you can get started. If you have not had any music theory training, this book will explain some methods musicians use to make written notes about what notes to play. These methods of making written notes about the notes to play are called, sensibly enough, 'Notation.'

Next you will be given an orientation that will show you where the notes are on the fretboard, in a useful way so that you can find and play the notes you will need. Then you'll be given a simple method of playing bass notes with your left hand, and playing melody notes and simple chords with your right hand. While learning this simple method, you will absorb the location of the notes without a great deal of effort, and you'll learn to move your fingers to play these notes. This basic knowledge of location and movement will be the basis of everything you will later learn.



There are two basic approaches to placing hands on a fretboard and playing notes.

1. One approach is to use some sort of ‘Moving’ system, where you learn certain shapes and then move them around the fretboard. For example, you might learn how to play an ‘A’ chord, and then move the same shape two frets up in order to play a ‘B’ chord.
2. The other to use some sort of ‘Fixed’ system, where your hands get placed — *and then stay where they are!* For example, you might place your hand on the fretboard near the tuners and then learn to play scales up and down by playing 3 notes on each string and moving across the strings, but not ever moving your hand to a location further from the tuners.

Of course, a proficient player can either play across the strings in one location, or he can play up and down the strings with the hand positioned in different places. However, even that proficient player had to start in *one place*, and for this particular method we’re going to start with a *Fixed Position* system where you place your hands in one place and learn to play there.

The simple but powerful method presented here is called the ‘Bookmark' system, because just as a bookmark helps you keep your place when navigating a novel, so does this Fixed Position method help you to keep your place about where the notes are! Further, you will be able, rather speedily, to play both scales and chords in one place with quite musical results.

In later books, the Bookmark system is expanded and tied into a moving system called the ‘Long-Finger’ system, which shows how to play chord shapes in different places along the fretboard, and to play improvisational scales placed over these chord shapes.

So we’re not casting a vote that a Fixed Position system is *better* than a Moving Position system, but we *are* deciding to *start* there.

In book one, therefore, you will learn a fixed position upon which to place both hands — left hand over the bass notes and right hand over the melody (or harmony) notes. You will learn the notes by name for your left hand and your right hand. This will form the basis for your later playing melody with either hand.

You will then learn how to arpeggiate chords in that position (in each hand), and then you will learn how to choose two notes from the arpeggiated chord to form a simple two-note chord, so that you can begin playing bass notes left hand and chords right hand, in a rhythmic and musical manner.

You will notice that we are talking about a system that would be primarily useful to a bass-player. As the system is expanded in later books you will learn other techniques that would be more useful if you wanted to play, for example, a solo coffee-house performance, or if you needed to take a melody solo over bass-hooks as the new band member on a Rolling Stones tour.

In this book, we will concentrate on a simple approach which will take you quickly to some familiarity with your instrument, and make you quickly able to generate musical results. You will also be given some songs and shown how to use the Bookmark System to play them.

Although book one is only an introductory book, the introductory Bookmark System, although rather simple, is enough to enable you to

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play very simple jobs as a bass player — an unusual bass player who can play bass notes and rhythmic chords at the same time!

The Bookmark System, given only reasonable and regular practice, will make the instrument and the technique yours. The system is not difficult. In fact, it's rather easy. That's why we call this book 'Easy Touch-Style Bassics.'

Touch-Style Power: (Books 2-4)

In books 2-4 you learn expanded methods applied to playing bass using touch-style technique. It expands upon the basic Bookmark system. You will learn new ways to play chords — a new fixed method, and a new moving method. Both are integrated into the basic Bookmark system. This trains your hands to be quick and smart — they learn the path, and then they can walk it without a lot of worry on your part.

Staying in one place improves accuracy and confidence, and opens up new techniques of interplay between the two hands. Remember that this system begins by showing you how to play while keeping your hands in one place, and that’s why it’s called the 'Bookmark System'.

As you experiment with this system, you will discover that your left hand teaches your right hand, and your right hand teaches your left hand! With these guys helping you, you'll make good progress!

The Bookmark System also provides a Master Exercise that you can use as a warm-up for each day's practice and play.

This Master Exercise makes your instrument familiar to your hands, and trains your hands about the path they'll generally be walking during play. Just like riding a bicycle, once you have learned it, you can think about the terrain ahead while your feet and your balance mostly take care of themselves. So will your hands serve you once the Master Exercise is familiar to your fingers.

Have you ever noticed that, when you whistle a tune, you just think about the tune and you don't have to think about moving your mouth? If you will merely practice, playing your instrument can be the same. You can think about the tune you're playing, and not about moving your hands. The Master Exercise will help.

The Master Exercise is especially useful in that everything you will learn while 'exercising' can be used when playing songs. Even better, learning the Master Exercise is not difficult, and once you learn it, you can cycle through all the musical keys so that playing in any key becomes comfortable.

The expanded Bookmark System and this Master Exercise are broken into three books to simplify learning.

Book 2 — Touch-Style Power: Expanding

In this book, you will focus on the Master Exercise in order to start playing songs in new and different ways. In the Master Exercise you'll learn more about arpeggiating chords (playing the chord one note at a time) in both the left-hand (bass) and the right-hand (for melody or harmony). Arpeggiating chords is a great basis for walking bass and other kinds of bass-playing, and also a great basis for improvising melody.

This book expands the Bookmark System, adding a new set of rich-sounding right-hand three-note chords. You now have additional techniques that you can call upon, to obtain a variety of sounds as a bass-player and accompanist. If you do not already read melodies in 'lead sheet' form, you will be shown how in this book. Then you are given some new songs and shown how to play them using the new things you've learned. Last, you will learn a standard way of 'working up' a song for later performance.

Book 3 -- Touch-Style Power: Moving

This book expands the Bookmark System by adding a new set of rich-sounding right-hand chords which move around the fretboard. It is a Moving System, but integrated with the Bookmark system, so you can always keep your place.

These particular chords also open the door to some of the pentatonic improvisational scales, and to some chord substitutions.

Book 4 -- Touch-Style Power: Complete

This book concentrates on applying the Bookmark system to a wider range of 'Chord Progressions'. These are sequences of chords which you will find occurring over and over and over in most any music that you play.

The Bookmark system is here extended to cover the full 'Diatonic Progression,' as well as 'Minor-Key Progressions'. (If these are unknown terms to you, just consider that this book gives you an exercise that makes it easy to play songs when you're looking at music charts.) As in all the books, you'll be given some new songs to

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play.

When you have completed this book, you should be able to play publicly as a bass-player with some skill and flexibility, playing simultaneous basslines and right-hand chordal accompaniment ('comping'). You should be able to do this on any musical job where you are provided with common musical charts, or where you have memorized the song beforehand. You will be able to play solos in several different ways.

Book 5 -- Touch-Style Solo

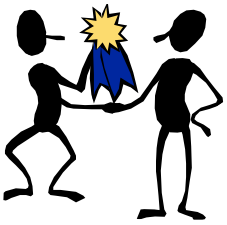
This book concentrates on right-hand melody, while playing chords with the left hand. This is somewhat like playing solo piano. You will learn to read and play melodies, while simultaneously playing the left-hand chords. You will be introduced to 'two-staff' music, also called the 'Grand Staff', so that you can either learn to play traditional written piano music, or just to know how it's done so you can work out songs from that format.

Several techniques are presented to help you arrange songs into a pleasant performance when you're playing solo.

Book 6 -- Touch-Style Gigging

This 'Nuts and Bolts' book concentrates more on the things you might find helpful if you are regularly performing in public. It covers technical musical things such as how to write (or improvise) an intro to a song. It goes into improvising melody using a simplified scale called 'Pentatonic' (because you only use five notes). It covers using some chord substitutions to make bland chord progressions sound more interesting. It covers a bit more musical theory. And everything is integrated into the Bookmark system you already know.

This book also discusses some of the basic 'how to run a business' facts which you will need if you want to get jobs and approach music as a way to earning a living, or earning part of your living.



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The Bookmark System — Locating the Notes

Where Are the Notes?

Before you can play a note you need to know where it is!

OK, but just looking at the fretboard and the strings there are many, many notes. We can't start everywhere. We've got to start in one place. So where should we start?

Or put another way: What are the most useful notes to know?

For a bass-player, that answer is easy: *The most useful notes to know are the low ones!*

How many notes must we know to start playing songs?

To play one particular song you could possibly get by with two or three notes. But in general it will be useful to know one octave of notes. (The words 'octave' means 'eight', and there are eight notes in an octave.) *So we'll learn eight notes*.

So where do we start? *We start by learning eight low notes.*

The Three Tunings:

Although touch-style can be done on almost any instrument in almost any tuning, we have to talk specifics in this method book. So we're not going to talk about variations such as tapping on mandolins, or special guitar 'open-tunings' or 'Crafty tuning'. We're not going to talk about special megatar tunings such as those called 'baritone' or 'half-bari' or 'mirror' or 'uncrossed hands' tunings. We're not going to talk about special stringing such as 7-string guitar. Any of those special tunings can be worked out by the student who wishes to do so.

In this set of books, we will however, present the Long-Finger and Bookmark systems as applied to the three most common tunings used for specialty tapping instruments --

■ An 8-string bass ('Bass' for short) tuned in the common way that a bass player would normally choose, meaning that the lowest string played open would be a Low-B, and the next string played open is the Low-E. (This Low-E on the second string is the same as the Low-E on the lowest string of a standard 4-string bass.) All strings tuned in straight fourths up from there.

■ A 'Bass-Bottom' 6x6 megatar ('Megatar' for short) A 'megatar' means a specialty tapping instrument with two groups of strings on the same neck, one set for bass and one set for melody. '6x6' means there are six strings in the bass set, and there are six strings in the melody set. The standard tuning for the megatar's melody strings is similar to guitar, but 1.5 steps lower and tuned in straight fourths. The lowest melody string on megatar played open would be C#, and then tuned in straight fourths ascending from there.

By 'Bass-Bottom' we mean that the bass set of strings is tuned like a standard 6-string bass, meaning that the lowest string played open would be a Low-B, and the next string played open is the Low-E. All bass strings tuned in straight fourths up from there.

■ A 'Fifths-Bottom' 6x6 instrument ('Fifths' for short) This type of instrument is a megatar by definition (ie.: it's a specialty instrument made for two-handed tapping, with a group of strings for bass and a separate group for melody). However, to avoid confusion with the Bass-Bottom megatar above, we'll just refer to it as an 'Instrument.' This is a 6x6 instrument where the bass strings are tuned in the 'inverted fifths' system popularized by players of the 'Chapman Stick'®.

We didn't want to call it a 'Fifths-Tuned' instrument as that's also confusing in discussion in that the melody side of this instrument is tuned in fourths and only the bass strings are tuned in inverted fifths. So 'Fifths-Bottom' seemed clearer.

The Chapman company actually patented this tuning, but that patent has expired and the tuning has become popular, especially in that it affords a nice-sounding group of left-hand chords.

In the 'Fifths-Bottom' instrument, the lowest bass string is in the Middle of the fretboard rather than on the near edge, and the strings are tuned in ascending fifths as you move toward the near edge of the fretboard. That is, as you play ascending bass notes across the bass strings from the largest bass string toward the smallest bass string, your left hand is moving toward your chin. The lowest bass string, played open, is tuned to C, the next-lowest string tuned to G, the next string to D, and so on.

An odd note regarding Megatar bass strings in Fourths, compared to Fifths-Bottom bass strings

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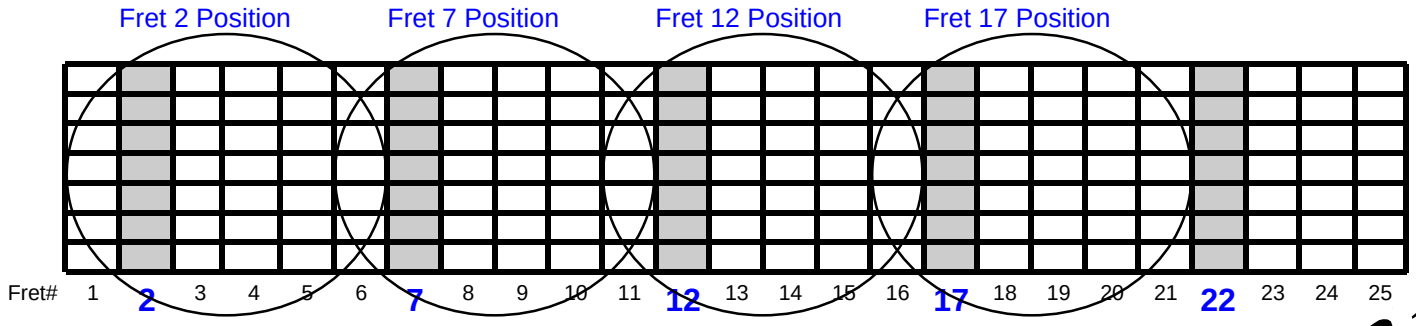
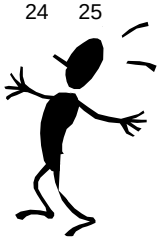
Four Fretboard Regions provide Four Hand Positions





in Inverted-Fifths — If you examine the note names of the open bass strings, you discover that even though the tunings ascend in opposite directions, the note names are the same! That is, the open note of the bass string nearest your chin is B, and the open note of the bass string near the middle of the fretboard is C!

Fret-Markers at 2, 7, 12, 17, & 22:

Many antique and ethnic instruments, and many specialty tapping instruments have special markings at frets 2, 7, 12, 17, and 22. These particular fret markings stand out like large landmarks on the fretboard. These special markings identify regions of the fretboard where one can find very similar patterns of notes, that is, a pattern of notes played just above fret 2 can often be played with the same finger-shape just above fret 7 or fret 12. (This handy fact will be later explained in detail.)

For our purpose in navigating around the fretboard, we will organize our navigation around these large landmarks.

If your instrument doesn't have these frets specially marked, you will find your learning easier if you will mark them. Stick some colored tape to the fretboard just behind frets 2, 7, 12, 17, and 22. (In this case, by ‘behind fret 2’ we mean between fret 1 and fret 2.)

Yes, if you stick tape on your fretboard, it will probably be real annoying to clean it off after a while, but you are going to find these special fret markings to be helpful over and over and over again. (Some of the Arvey-brand office stickums, or the Post-It Notes, or good old Masking Tape will probably come off with minimal mess and crud left on your fretboard.)

Or, you could buy a different brand of tapping instrument -- one that has special markings at 2, 7, 12, 17, and 22!

Fretboard Regions and Hand Positions:

When you look at your instrument, you see that the lowest notes on the bass strings are found on the largest strings and at frets close to the instrument's nut. Because these notes are in the near vicinity and above a large landmark -- that is, the noticeably marked Fret #2 -- we're going to refer to this general area as the 'Fret 2 Position', as generally shown by the leftmost large circle on the graph.

Although the notes in the Fret 2 Position are clearly the lowest notes, there are sometimes advantages to be found in playing at the next position, which is in the near vicinity and above the major landmark we call Fret #7. We will refer to this general area of the frets near Fret #7 as 'Fret 7 Position'.

Before we go on, please notice that there's a difference in sound between Fret 2 Position and Fret 7 Position.

The notes at Fret 2 Position have longer string lengths, so they have more overtones, which makes them growlier, and perhaps 'richer', with greater character.

The notes at Fret 7 Position have shorter string lengths so they have more midrange, which produces a punchier and simpler sound with greater pop. You as an individual might use completely different words to describe the sound of notes at these two positions, but if you'll play some notes at each of the two positions, we're sure you'll agree that the notes at Fret 2 Position have a different quality of sound than the notes at Fret 7.

Later on when you're playing songs in performance, sometimes you will want to play the notes at Fret 2 and other times you will prefer to play the same notes at Fret 7 Position. It's one basic way to change your sound to enhance a particular song.

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How to Divvy Up the Four Positions

The Fretboard Graph shows the eight strings of an 8-string bass, but the graph holds true for Bass-Bottom Megatar or Fifths-Bottom instrument as well. On all the instruments the specially-marked frets at 2 and 7, 12 and 17 fall in the same place — because of course each of these fretted instruments has a fret 2, a fret 7, a fret 12, and a fret 17!

Handily, it nicely works out that we can use the same basic navigation for all three instruments.

You *could* make a case for a fifth hand position located at and above fret 22. The only reason we've not marked one is that on some instruments you start to run out of frets.

As a practical matter, we can assign these four Fretboard Regions to your two hands. As a general rule, you'll use your left hand to play low notes at Hand Position 2 and 7, and you'll use your right hand to play notes at Hand Position 12 and 17. That's simple enough.

When you place your hands on the fretboard this will make obvious sense. Your left hand can easily and comfortably reach the low bass strings at Position 2 and Position 7. Your right hand then falls quite easily on Position 12 and Position 17.

Please try this now so you can feel it. You don't even have to fret the notes. Just flopping your hands around in position will cause you to feel it.

You'll notice that your hands don't collide and don't obstruct each other, and each hand has access to two or more octaves of notes. That's plenty of notes to get some music played!

As you will discover, what you learn for your left hand at Position 7 will apply with very little adaptation to Position 2. Likewise, what you learn for your right hand at Position 17 will apply with very little adaptation to Position 12.

Hand Positions for this book

For learning purposes in this book, for each instrument we'll select one hand position for the left hand and one hand position for the right hand.

We now have to begin discussing the tunings with specifics, so in text immediately following, we'll separately discuss …

1. Left hand on 8-string Bass ('**Bass**'),
2. Left hand on Bass-Bottom Megatar ('**Megatar**'), and
3. Left hand on Fifths-Bottom instrument ('**Fifths**')

At the end of these three discussions, we'll compare all three. Naturally, if you are only playing one instrument in one tuning, you can completely skip the discussions of the other tunings. You will not miss a thing.

Teachers: Special Note about Fingering System used in this book ...

Educators and Teachers, please see 'Pedagogy Note' in Appendix for explanation of how the system presented in this book differs from classical fingering.

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8-String Bass — Left-Hand Low Notes

On Bass, your left hand is generally going be playing at Fret 7 Position.

Some of you bass players will probably object at this point. On your other basses, you're more used to playing notes near Fret 2. The notes down in Fret 2 Position are growlier and more 'obvious' to a bass player. And yes, the notes down in Fret 2 Position contain the ultra-low notes on the biggest string. And naturally, bass players like low notes.

But we're not going to start there.

The notes in Fret 7 Position will let your left hand move both up and down the fretboard without running into a nut, and you will find that the Fret 7 position provides a smooth tone with lots of pop, which is widely useful in songs.

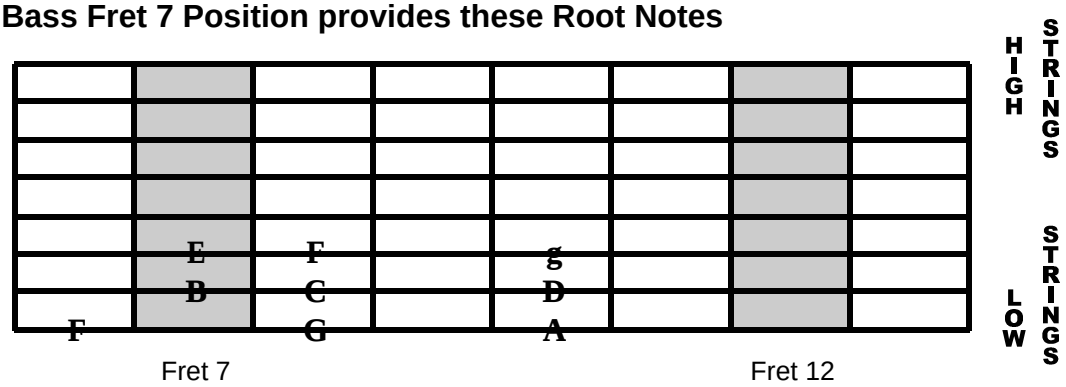
Further, the Fret 7 position can be kinder to your wrist, and your fingers don't have to stretch as much between frets which will improve initial learning accuracy.

Also, learning the Fret 7 bass position will directly translate if you wish to play either Bass-Bottom Megatar or Fifths-Bottom instrument -- that is, everything you learn here in this position can be applied to the other instruments with little or no change in fingering.

Lastly, this position will later allow you to operate your two hands in exactly identical fashion, which lets you learn useful technique approximately twice as fast.

So for now, use Fret 7 Position for learning this system. You can easily translate into Fret 2 Position later.

Bass Fret 7 Position provides these Root Notes



8-String Bass — Left-Hand Fingering

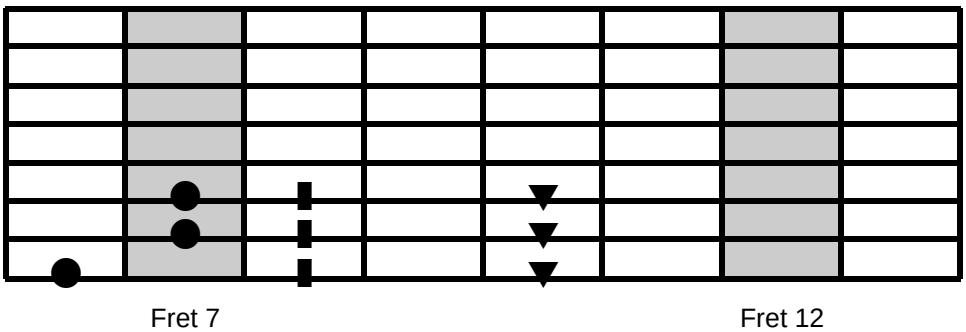
As you can see, there are three notes per string. To play these notes from the lowest to the highest, use three left-hand fingers to play three notes, then go to the next string and again use three fingers to play three notes, and then to the next string and do the same. (In this system, your little finger will not normally be used in scalar playing.)

Please try playing these nine notes, up and down. Notice that the F and the G note are repeated. If you were playing the root of an F-Chord, which F note would you chose?

As a bass player, your general rule will be to play the *lowest* one.

Using fingering as shown, please learn these nine root notes now.

Bass Left-Hand Fingering for Root Notes



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

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Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Low Notes

On Bass-Bottom Megatar, your left hand is generally going be playing at Fret 7 Position.

Some of you bass players will probably object at this point. On your bass, you're more used to playing notes near Fret 2. The notes down in Fret 2 Position are growlier and more 'obvious' to a bass player. And yes, the notes down in Fret 2 Position contain the ultra-low notes on the biggest string. And naturally, bass players like low notes.

But we're not going to start there.

The notes in Fret 7 Position will let your left hand move both up and down the fretboard without running into a nut, and you will find that the Fret 7 position provides a smooth tone with more pop, which is widely useful in songs.

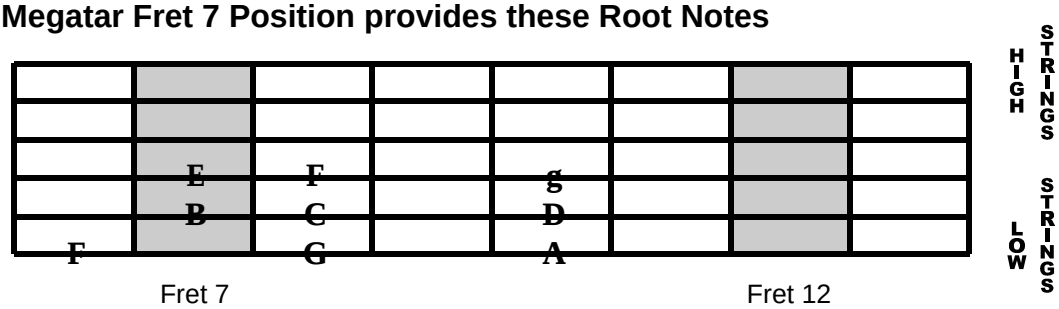
Further, the Fret 7 position can be kinder to your wrist, and your fingers don't have to stretch as much between frets which will improve initial learning accuracy.

Also, learning the Fret 7 bass position will directly translate if you wish to play either 8-String Bass or Fifths-Bottom instrument -- that is, everything you learn here in this position can be applied to the other instruments with little or no change in fingering.

Lastly, this position will later allow you to operate your two hands in exactly identical fashion, which lets you learn useful technique approximately twice as fast.

So for now, use Fret 7 Position for learning this system. You can easily translate into Fret 2 Position later.

Megatar Fret 7 Position provides these Root Notes



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Fingering

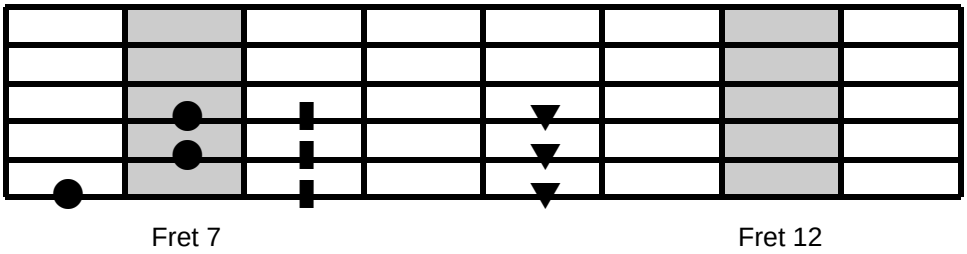
As you can see, there are three notes per string. To play these notes from the lowest to the highest, use three fingers to play three notes, then go to the next string and again use three fingers to play three notes, and then to the next string and do the same. (In this system, your little finger will not normally be used in scalar playing.)

Please try playing these nine notes, up and down. Notice that the F and the G note are repeated. If you were playing the root of an F-Chord, which F note would you chose?

As a bass player, your general rule will be to play the *lowest* one.

Using fingering as shown, please learn these nine root notes now.

Megatar Left-hand Fingering



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
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4 = X

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Fifths-Bottom Instrument— Left-Hand Low Notes

On Fifths-Bottom instrument, your left hand is generally going be playing at Fret 2 Position.

Your position is different from Bass and Bass-Bottom Megatar because your low strings are located differently. However, notice that the *Shape* and the *Note-Names* of these nine notes are *Identical* to the shape and note-names give on the previous pages for Bass and for Bass-Bottom Megatar!

One of the powerful features of this system is that what you learn for one tuning can be applied to the other tuning with very little modification.

If you can play these notes in this shape with your left hand on your 'Fifths' instrument, then you can pick up an 8-String Bass or a Bass-Bottom Megatar and begin playing almost immediately.

If you can do pushups on the driveway, you can do pushups on the lawn!

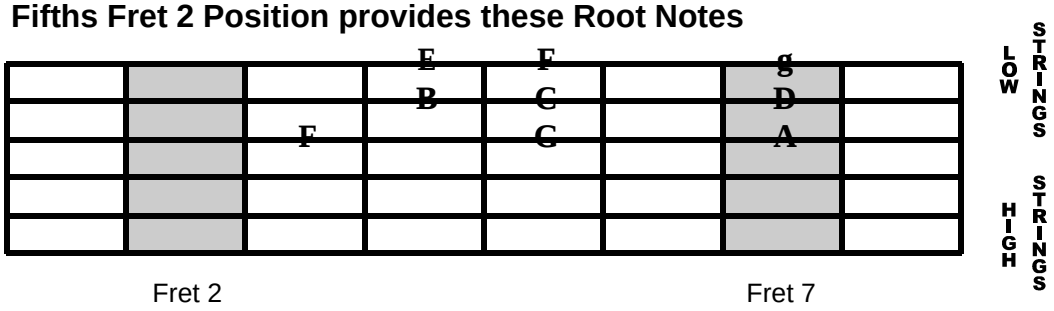
There are, of course, other ways to play roots on the Fifths-Bottom instrument. For example, you can play all the roots on the two lowest strings (D, E, F, & G on lowest string, and A, B, C, & D on next lowest string).

However, the position as shown below enables you to play these roots without moving your hand, which will improve your initial learning accuracy.

Further, this position as shown below will later allow you to operate your two hands in exactly identical fashion, which lets you learn useful technique approximately twice as fast.

So for now, use Fret 2 Position as shown for learning this system. It will pay dividends.

Fifths Fret 2 Position provides these Root Notes



Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Left-Hand Fingering

As you can see, there are three notes per string. To play these notes, use three fingers to play three notes on one string, then go to the next string and again use three fingers to play three notes, and then to the next string and do the same. (In this system, your little finger will not normally be used in scalar playing.) Please try playing these nine notes, up and down.

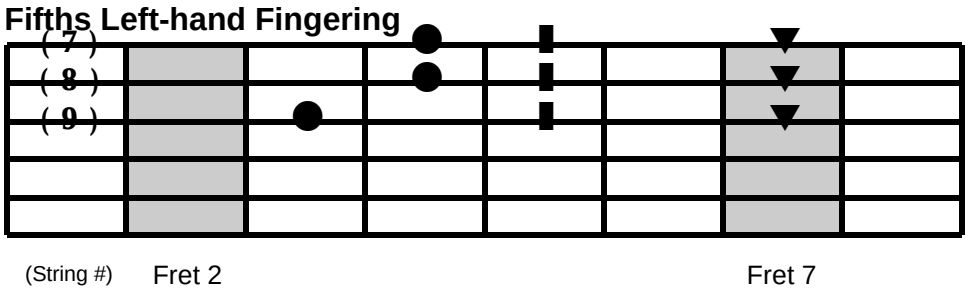
Notice that it doesn't sound quite scale-like. On string #7 (lowest-pitched string) you ascend to the note G, and then sort of leap up to the note B on string #8. Then on string #8 you ascend to the note D, and then again leap up to the note F on string #9.

Try it the other way, starting your notes on string #9. Play three notes on string #9, then three notes on string #8, then the three notes on string #7. Now the notes are scale-like, but there's an octave drop between each string! An odd sound! However, for learning our roots in this system, this will work fine!

Also, notice that the F and the G note are repeated. If you were playing the root of an F-Chord, which F note would you chose? As a bass player, your general rule will be to play the *lowest* one.

Using fingering as shown, please learn these nine root notes now.

Fifths Left-hand Fingering



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

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Comparing the Low Notes on all Three Instruments

For clarification, here are all three instruments with the Left-Hand Low Notes marked.

As you can see, the Bass and the Bass-Bottom Megatar play the Low Notes exactly the same. On these instruments the lowest-pitched string is the string at the bottom of the graph.

On the Fifths-Bottom instrument, however, the lowest-pitched string is the string at the *top* of the graph. So although you could play the same notes at the 7th Fret Position as shown on the Bass or Megatar graph, and they'd be the same note names, they are *not* the low notes!

So to play the Low Notes on Fifths instruments, you must play the nine notes, as shown, in the 2nd Fret position.

But do note that they ARE the same note names in the two positions.

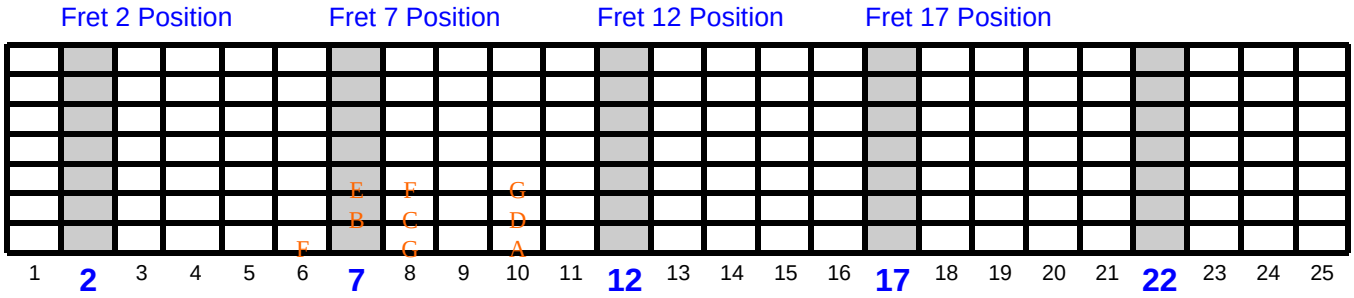
Also, on the Bass or Megatar as you play notes from the lowest line of the graph upwards, you are playing notes of ascending pitch, going up from F to G up to A up to B and so on.

However on the Fifths instrument, as you play the same pattern from the lowest line on the graph, the notes go up from F to G up to A, but then from A to B drops an octave. A nice but somewhat unusual sound. Then you play up from B to C up to D. And then as you play from D to E the sound again drops an octave.

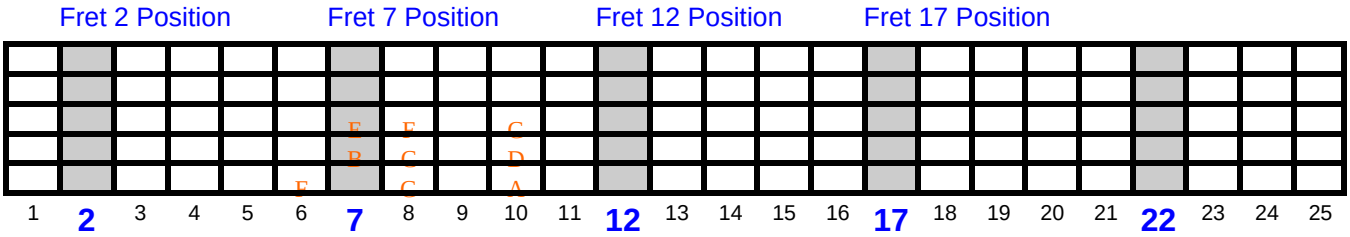
Playing these notes on the Fifths instrument does not have the same kind of ascending sound.

However, you will be able to use the same system to learn to play bass and chords and more on the Fifths instrument. And you will be able to switch between instruments fairly easily as well.

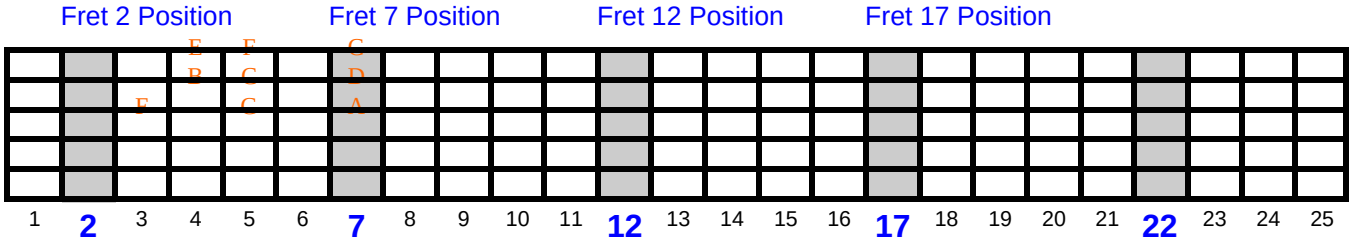
Eight-String Bass Left-Hand Low Notes



Bass-Bottom Megatar Left-Hand Low Notes



Fifths-Bottom Instrument Left-Hand Low Notes



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8-String Bass — Right-Hand High Notes (for Melody or Harmony)

Now we must select an area among the melody strings to place your right hand. We want…

- A right-hand location where your two hands won't collide, so that means *higher up the neck*, and
- A right-hand location where your right hand can finger the *exact same pattern of notes* as those low notes under your left hand.

There are three possibilities. One gives us neat access to the four top strings, but it's uncomfortably close to the left hand. It would be worrisome playing there, and possibly the hands will interfere with each other.

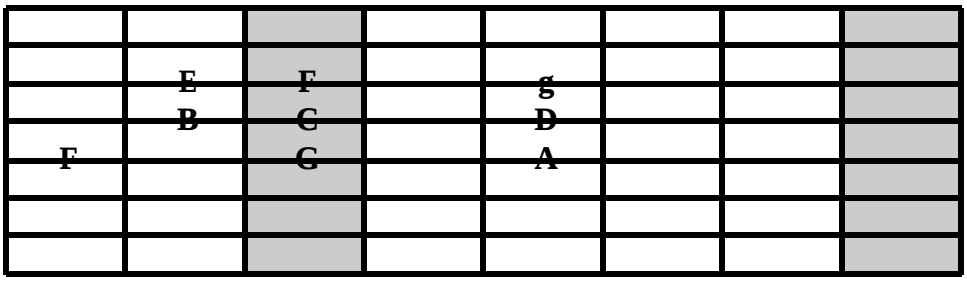
Another possibility places the right hand very high above the seventeenth fret but it only gives access to the top three strings, which works out to be awkward.

The best position appears to be to place the right hand at the Fret 17 position as shown. This gives you three strings for the left hand, and then three for the right hand (and a couple more high strings accessible for the right hand when later playing scalar melodies).

It's a little clumsy that the left hand only gets three strings before encountering strings appropriated by the right hand, but them's the breaks in the world of 8-string bass. As you will see, having separate groups of strings as megatars do solves exactly this kind of problem.

So for 8-String Bass, here are the notes you want —

Bass Fret 17 Position provides these Scale Notes



Fret 17 Fret 22

8-String Bass — Right-Hand Fingering

The pattern and note names are IDENTICAL to your left-hand low notes, so there are still three notes per string. To play these notes from the lowest to the highest, use three right-hand fingers to play three notes, then go to the next string and again use three fingers to play three notes, and then to the next string and do the same.

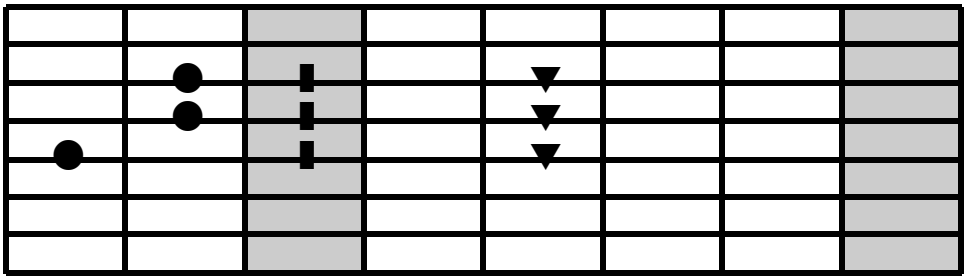
Please try playing these nine notes, up and down. Notice that you get two F and two G notes..

Using right-hand fingering as shown, please learn these nine melody notes now.

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

Bass Right-Hand Fingering (Melody Notes)



Fret 17 Fret 22

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Bass-Bottom Megatar — Right-Hand High Notes (for Melody or Harmony)

Now we must select an area among the melody strings to place your right hand. We want…

- A right-hand location where your two hands won't collide, so that means *higher up the neck*, and
- A right-hand location where your right hand can finger the *exact same pattern of notes* as those low notes under your left hand.

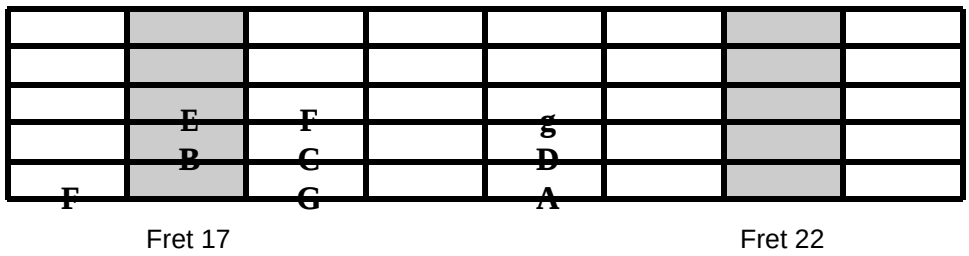
The best position available places the right hand at the Fret 17 position as shown. This makes your right hand identical to your left hand in that you're starting the pattern on the lowest string of the group. (ie.: the left hand begins the pattern on the lowest bass string, and the right hand begins the pattern on the lowest melody string.)

Further, the patterns occur in identical visual relationship to the specially-marked frets 7 and 17. For example, the lowest bass G-note is one fret up from specially-marked fret 7, and the lowest melody G-note is one fret up from specially-marked fret 17.

Each hand has a lot of open strings above the pattern, which means that later after you've mastered three strings and you want to wander higher, each hand has exactly the same universe waiting above! This is a good thing.

And later, when the bass players say, "Dammit! Now I want to play bass at Fret 2 Position!" then the right hand can just slide down to Fret 12 Position and still have a universe identical to the bass hand! Life is good.

Megatar Fret 17 Position provides these Scale Notes



Bass-tuned Megatar — Right-Hand Fingering for Melody Notes

The pattern and note names are IDENTICAL to your left-hand low notes, so there are still three notes per string. To play these notes from the lowest to the highest, use three right-hand fingers to play three notes, then go to the next string and again use three fingers to play three notes, and then to the next string and do the same.

Please try playing these nine notes, up and down. Notice that you get two F and two G notes..

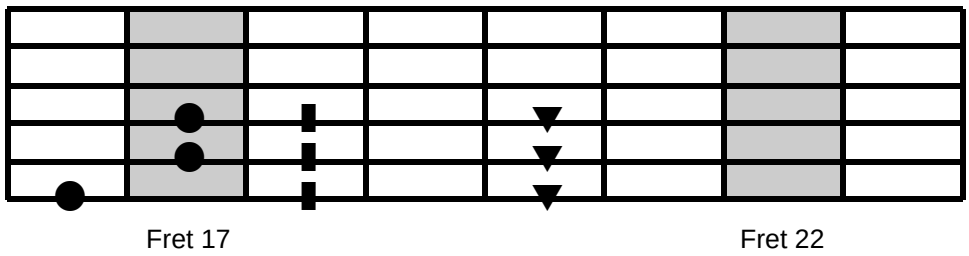
Using right-hand fingering as shown, please learn these nine melody notes now.

NOTE: The Bass-Bottom Megatar has the best of all worlds in that the left-hand bass notes and the right-hand melody notes have absolutely identical patterns and are positioned relative to the special dot-markers in an exactly identical fashion.

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

Megatar Right-Hand Fingering (Melody Notes)



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Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand High Notes (for Melody or Harmony)

Now we must select an area among the melody strings to place your right hand. We want…

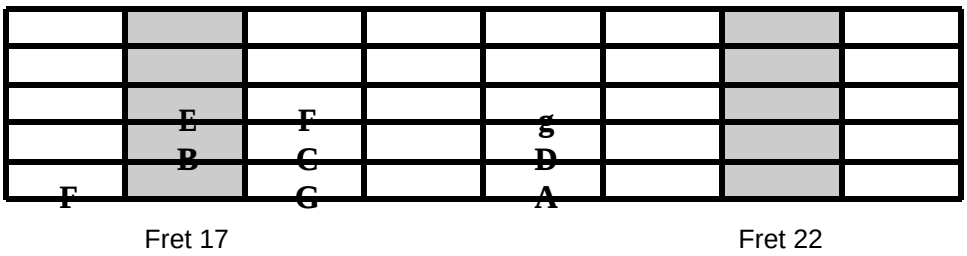
- A right-hand location where your two hands won't collide, so that means *higher up the neck*, and
- A right-hand location where your right hand can finger the *exact same pattern of notes* as those low notes under your left hand.

The best position available places the right hand at the Fret 17 position as shown. This permits your right hand to play the identical pattern of notes as are played by your left-hand on the bass strings.

We have placed the right hand on the *lowest-pitched* of the melody strings, which are nearest the center of the fretboard. This is similar to the way we placed the left hand on the *lowest-pitched* of the bass strings. Visually the two hands look a little different relative to the specially-marked frets. However, each note pattern is identical, and each note pattern is placed on the lowest-pitched strings available.

The right hand positioning will also work out nicely later when you wish to play melodies from written music, as this position gives you access to all the notes normally found on a 'treble-clef' or a 'leadsheet' of music, and these notes fall nicely under your fingers.

Fifths Fret 17 Position provides these Scale Notes



Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand Fingering

The pattern and note names are IDENTICAL to your left-hand low notes, so there are still three notes per string. To play these notes from the lowest to the highest, use three right-hand fingers to play three notes, then go to the next string and again use three fingers to play three notes, and then to the next string and do the same.

Please try playing these nine notes, up and down. Notice that you get two F and two G notes.

You will also notice that, since the melody strings are tuned in fourths, you can ascend and descend in a strictly scalar fashion, with no octave leaps as you experienced when playing the left-hand bass notes.

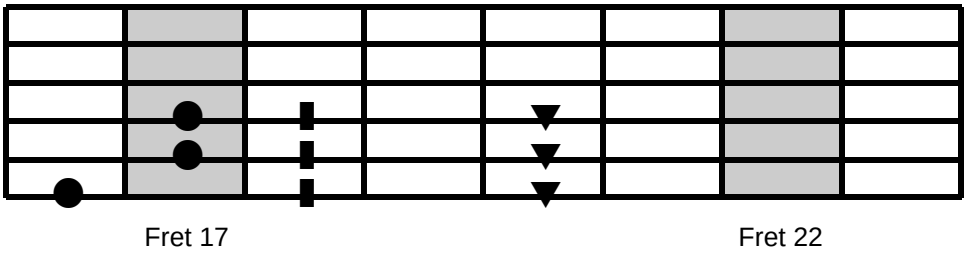
Using right-hand fingering as shown, please learn these nine melody notes now.

Note: The <u>melody</u> side of Bass-Bottom Megatar and Fifths-Bottom Instrument are identical.

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

Fifths Right-Hand Fingering (Melody Notes)



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Comparing the High Melody/Harmony Notes on all Three Instruments

For clarification, here are all three instruments with the Right-Hand High Notes marked.

As you can see, the Bass-Bottom Megatar and the Fifths-Bottom Instrument play the High Notes exactly the same, because their Melody Strings are tuned identically in fourths. On these instruments the lowest-pitched melody string is the string at the bottom of the graph.

On the 8-String Bass, however, there is only one group of strings, and you've already told your left hand it could have the bottom three strings for bass notes, so your first opportunity to place the melody note-pattern is on the fourth string from the bottom.

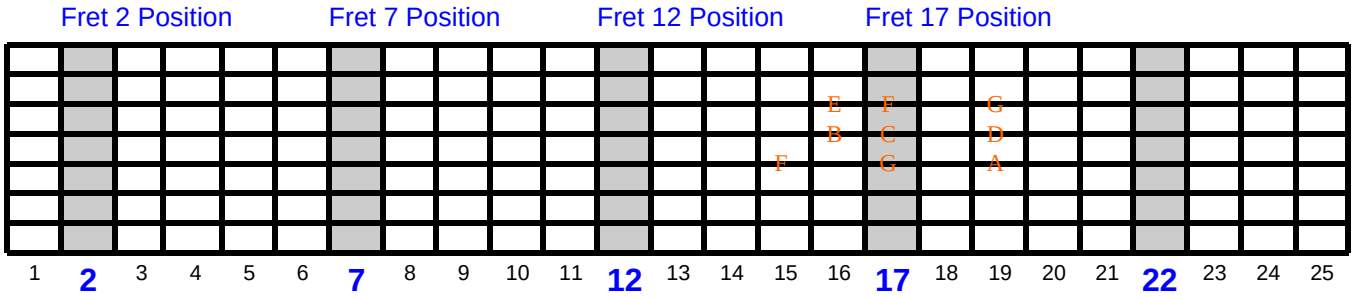
One difference becomes apparent, in that you can see that the 8-String Bass has both hands playing in one group of strings, so that keeping your left-hand fingers and your right-hand fingers off the identical string becomes an issue.

On the Megatar and Fifths-Bottom Instrument, however, this is a non-issue. In fact, the very reason for having two separate groups of strings on one fretboard is to allow each hand free play within the string group without interference from the other hand.

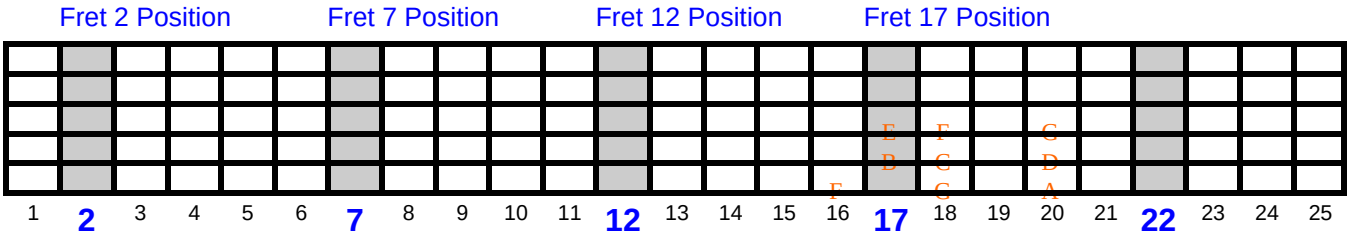
But, differences aside, the most important fact is that all three instruments have the IDENTICAL note pattern. Further, it sounds the same played on all three instruments because the melody strings on all three instruments are tuned in fourths.

And remember, on each of these instruments your right hand on high notes is playing the exact same pattern of nine notes as is your left hand on the bass notes. It's a thing of beauty.

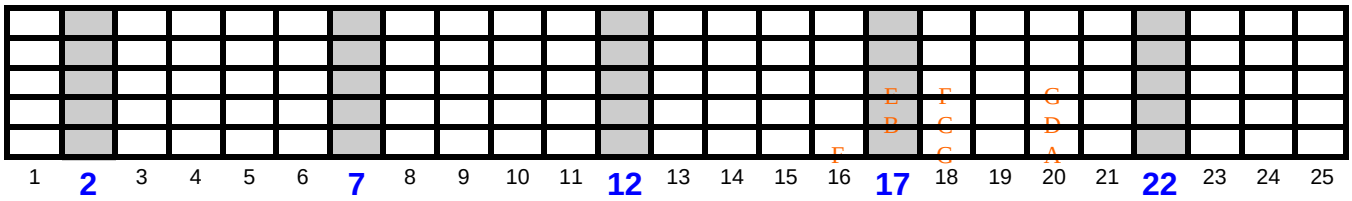
Eight-String Bass — Right-Hand High Notes (Melody)



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Right-Hand High Notes (Melody)



Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand High Notes (Melody)



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Putting Both Hands on the Instrument! First, the 8-String Bass ...

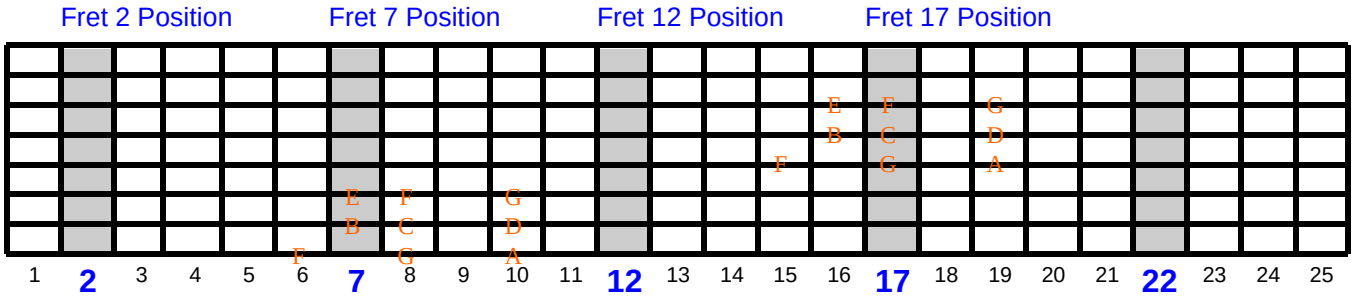
It has been perhaps a bit laborious, but we've now examined how the left hand is positioned on all three instruments, and we've examined how the right hand is positioned on all three instruments.

Our next step is to examine each instrument with *both hands* shown in position.

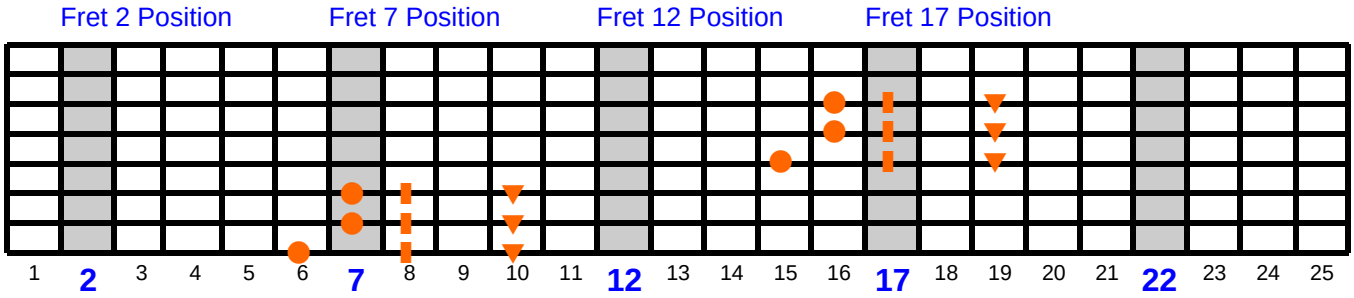
Don't be frightened. It will be easy.

First, here's an 8-String Bass ('Bass') showing the left-hand bass notes, and the right-hand melody notes ...

Eight-String Bass showing Bass and Melody Note-Pattern



Eight-String Bass Fingering for Bass and Melody Note-Pattern



That's not so tough!

And now the obvious experiment is for you to place both hands on the instrument, and play these notes like a scale, up and down.

First try the bass notes.

Then try the melody notes.

Then try playing the bass and the melody notes at the same time. Play legato (long and slow notes) and play right on the beat. As you play the scale up and down, put your attention into your fingertips and *feel* the fret beneath the string you're playing. You will get the best sound by tapping right *on* the fret, but with most of your fingertip behind the fret (i.e., toward the tuners).

Feel the fingertips of first one hand and then the other. If you get a note that doesn't sound right, then place your attention into the fingertips of that hand and feel the frets.

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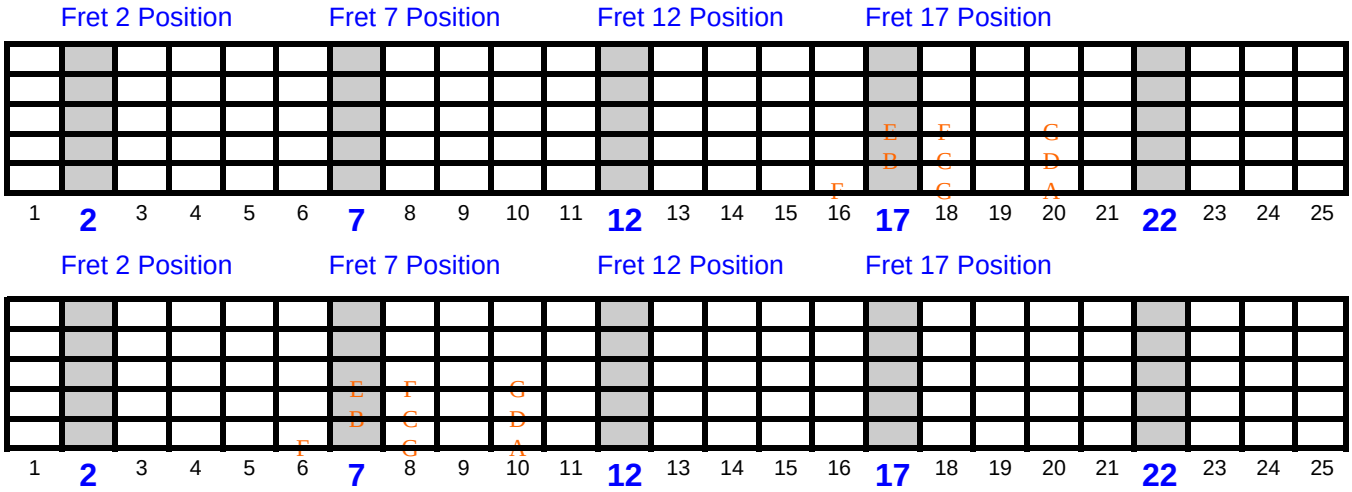
Putting Both Hands on the Bass-Tuned Megatar —

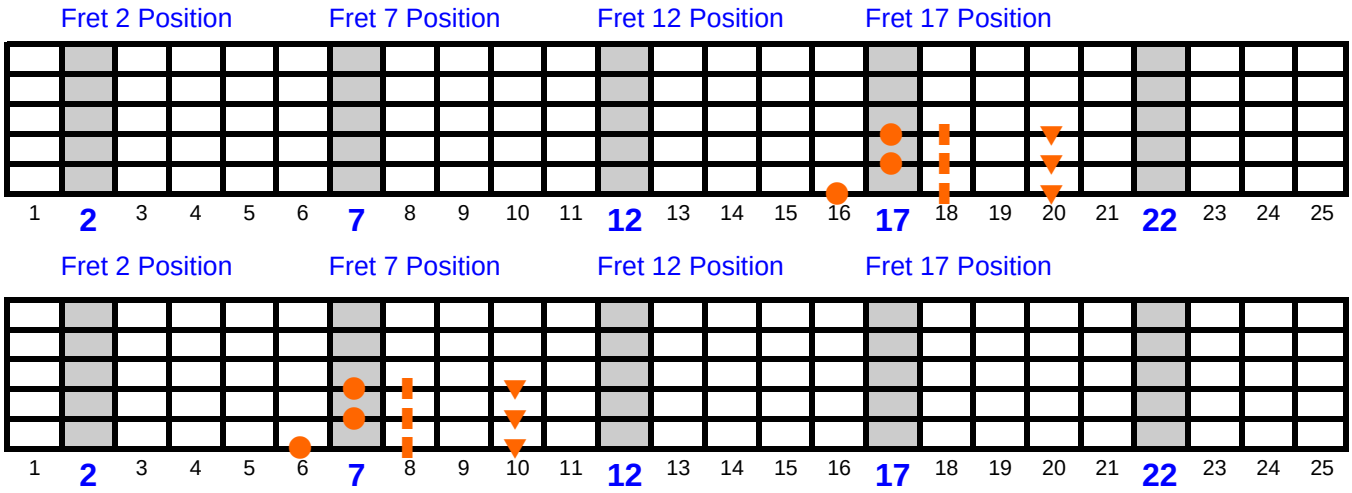
Our next step is to examine each instrument with *both hands* shown in position.

Here is a Bass-Bottom Megatar with both bass and melody note-patterns marked ...

Bass-Bottom Megatar showing Bass & Melody Note-Pattern



Bass-Bottom Megatar Fingering for Bass & Melody Note-Pattern



Now the obvious experiment is for you to place both hands on the instrument, and play these notes like a scale, up and down.

First try the bass notes.

Then try the melody notes.

Then try playing the bass and the melody notes at the same time. Play legato (long and slow notes) and play right on the beat. As you play the scale up and down, put your attention into your fingertips and *feel* the fret beneath the string you're playing. You will get the best sound by tapping right *on* the fret, but with most of your fingertip behind the fret (i.e., toward the tuners).

Feel the fingertips of first one hand and then the other. If you get a note that doesn't sound right, then place your attention into the fingertips of that hand and feel the frets.

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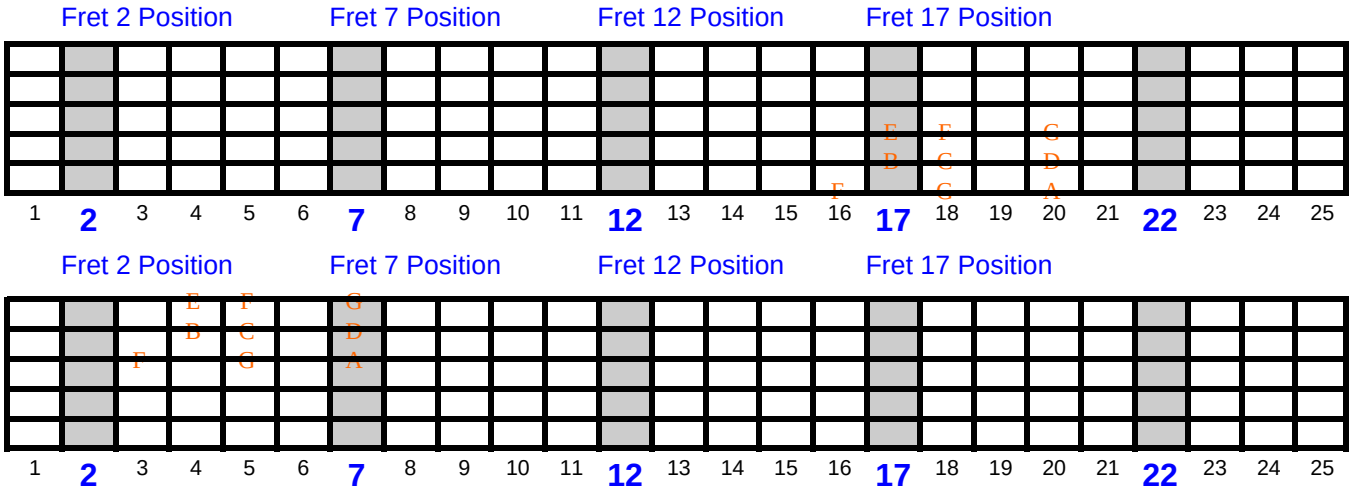
Putting Both Hands on the Fifths-Tuned Instrument

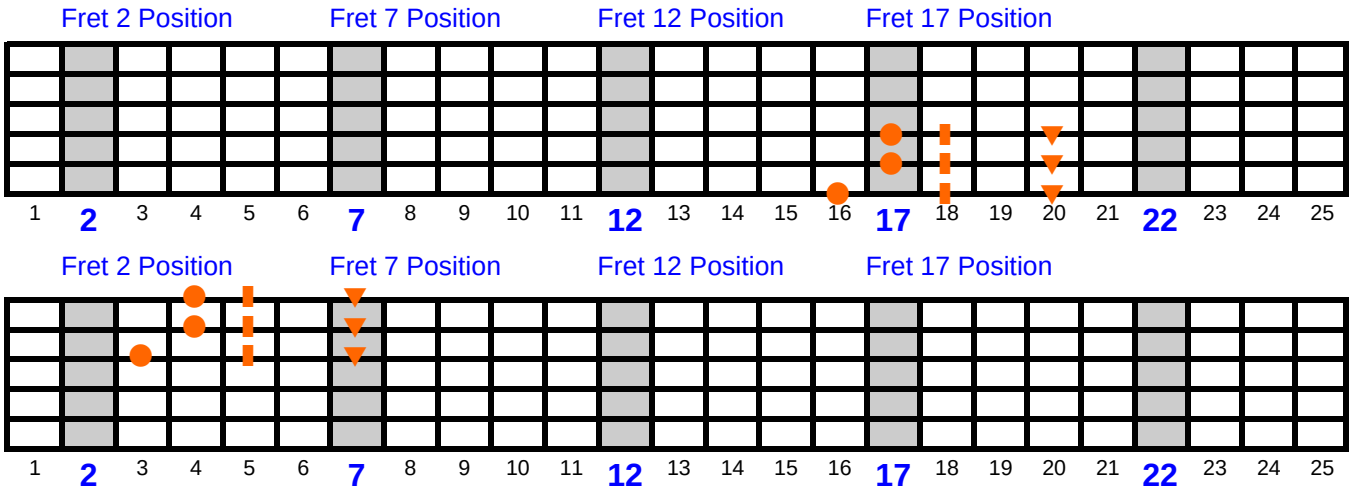
Our next step is to examine each instrument with *both hands* shown in position.

Here is a Fifths-Bottom Instrument with both bass and melody note-patterns marked ...

Fifths-Bottom Instrument showing Bass & Melody Note-Pattern



Fifths-Bottom Instrument Fingering for Bass & Melody Note-Pattern



Now the obvious experiment is for you to place both hands on the instrument, and play these notes like a scale, up and down.

First try the bass notes. Then the melody notes.

Then try playing the bass and the melody notes at the same time. Play legato (long and slow notes) and play right on the beat. As you play the scale up and down, put your attention into your fingertips and *feel* the fret beneath the string you're playing. You will get the best sound by tapping right *on* the fret, but with most of your fingertip behind the fret (i.e., toward the tuners).

The bass notes will have octave drops as you play *up* the scale, but it will sound OK.

Feel the fingertips of first one hand and then the other. If you get a note that doesn't sound right, then place your attention into the fingertips of that hand and feel the frets.

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What's Next?

Viewed very simply, the Bookmark System has only two parts —

1. Where is the playing field?
2. How do you move on this field?

1. The Playing Field is Nine Notes

We have now arrived at the point where you know the boundaries of the playing field. That is, the playing field for the Bookmark System is this pattern of only nine notes. Inside this pattern of nine notes you can operate.

This is most wonderful, in a way.

Because we've now established a way to begin with clarity. In other words, if you look at the instrument with no particular approach, you'll see that there are LOTS OF NOTES. Why, you can find the note 'A' over here and here and there and here and over here and there and here and here, and … Well, you get the idea.

When there are too many freedoms, there is no structure!

More items than you can deal with constitute a *confusion*. This seems to be a universal human reality — When there are more things than you feel you can deal with, you feel confused.

The way to handle any confusion is to reduce the problem to a smaller number of items. How many? Why, a small number that you feel you can deal with!

Now here's a fact: For purposes of starting your learning on an 8-string bass or a megatar, there are just too many notes to start everywhere!

So you'll have to just start in *one* place.

There is no other way to do it.

So what have we done so far? We have reduced this confusion of notes and strings into just three strings and nine notes — and we've put the three strings and the nine notes under each of your hands.

Now you only need to think about a playing field which falls immediately under your two hands, and this field is identical in shape and meaning under each of your hands.

By this approach, we make the complex simple, so that you can begin.

Get it? Got it? Good!

Now the question of *'what notes to play'* has become very easy. We'll start our learning by playing these nine notes. Nine notes is much easier than hundreds of notes!

Isn't that great?

2. How to Move on the Field?

The alert student will have guessed that the next question must be '*how shall we play the nine notes'?*

And as you might imagine, now that we have a simple playing field, it will be fairly easy to start playing the notes.

If you are a bass-player, you know that the first way to think about notes is to play the 'Roots' of the chords.

For those of you who aren't bass-players and who don't know a root from a hole in the ground, here's the scoop —

You can have a song which drones on and on using only one note. But it's not a very interesting song. You have probably heard the toddler next door singing this song upon occasion, and most likely you had enjoyed it to the fullest long before he stopped singing.

Just about every song *does* have a central main note, around which the song moves. For example, when you hear somebody say a song has a 'key signature of C', what this boils down to is that the song is going to move around on various notes, but almost certainly it's going to end, and feel complete, on the note of C.

What songs generally do is play some notes based on the main note, then wander off for some other notes that are more jarring or seem somehow 'different,' and then return to the one main note that seems complete and final.

We apologize if this seems a little vague, but it's hard to accurately generalize because there are so many combinations of sounds which we humans seem to think are good. For example, young folks, think about polkas! For example, older folks, think about grunge rock!

For now, we are lucky because we do not have to write songs. For our purpose in learning, we can use songs which somebody else has graciously already written! How kind!

Further, wiser minds than ours have long noted that certain patterns appear over and over and over in our typical Western Music such as you will commonly hear in the USA or Europe.

And this means that we can start our learning by learning some patterns which aren't even as complicated as a song. Instead of initially working on a song which might have many 'chords' (stacks of notes) we can begin with a simple introductory exercise which involves only one chord.

Even when we go on to exercises that use two chords or four chords, or even when we go on to songs which have lots of chords, as bass-players

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we can simplify these 'chords' (stacks of notes) down to the single lowest note in each stack of notes. And that lowest note is called the 'Root' of the chord.

We can work up exercises playing this Root.

After we can play this root pretty good, we'll naturally begin to think we are pretty slick, and just as naturally we will want to show off for our girlfriend and such.

Therefore we will then learn to play the other notes in the chord. Now in the Bookmark System, we will start out thinking of nearly all chords as having four notes. (The technical among you will realize we're saying that we'll start with 'seventh chords'.)

As a practical matter relating to learning, it just means that after you can play one note per chord, we can move on to playing four notes per chord.

After that, you can start playing the two hands differently. This can produce an amazing amount of variability and musical results. For example, your right hand might just play two harmony notes from the chord, while your left hand goes back to playing just the roots.

With nothing more than this, many hundreds of rhythmic possibilities arise.

And it goes on from there.

Here's how it works: the Bookmark System uses a Master Exercise, which consists initially of playing both hands identically, going up and down the four notes in the chord.

After you gain some skill, you can do this with several chords in a row, and it won't be long before you can select a different chord sequence every day. In this way you can move through the different keys, with your hands gaining more and more familiarity with the path.

By selecting just certain parts of the four chord notes, and by using rhythmic variations, we can create a vast variety of musically-useful patterns.

And because the Master Exercise consists of musically-useful patterns, you will be able to directly apply what you are learning in order to play songs. And that won't take too long, either, because at the simplest level, songs are only sequences of chords as well.

Next: Gold Record on the Wall

(Well, that could take a little longer.)

And now that you know the playing field of Nine Notes, we will next consider how to move on this field. Which brings us to the next section, the Bookmark System itself …

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The Bookmark System — Playing the Nine Notes

With Nine Notes, we Play Chords

We assume that you can now pick up the instrument, put it on, and locate the nine holy notes beneath each hand,. We assume that you can play the nine notes from the bottom to the top, and are nearly always playing the correct note.

If not, please go back to last chapter.

If so, now we'll begin by playing a chord. It would be possible to start with scales and then handle chords, but we believe we can get you playing useful music faster by working on chords first, which will in time make the underlying scale obvious without even trying.

The Bookmark System will teach you to play the Seven Magic Chords, using the Nine Holy Notes. Then you'll be shown how to modify the seven magic chords to make the other chords you'll need.

You'll learn to play these chords with each hand, then you'll play the shape simultaneously with both hands, and then you'll learn to play part with one hand and part with the other, which opens the door to many rhythmic possibilities and unique 'Rhythm Bass' skill.

We'll Start with One Chord — GM7

Why GM7?

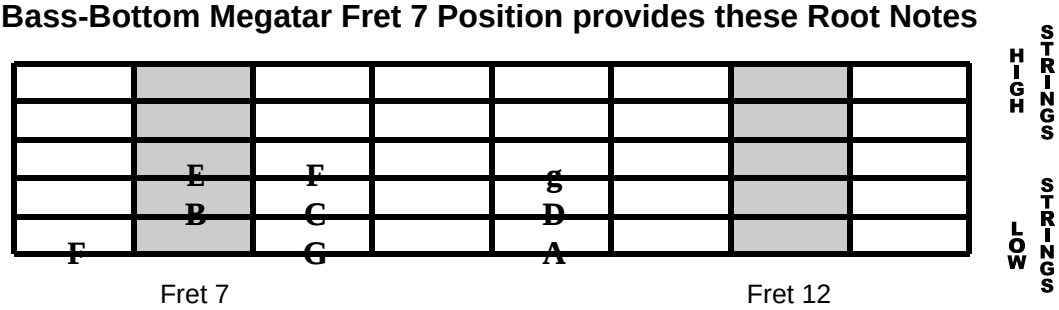
Because it's relatively easy to play and convenient for us to describe. We've got to start somewhere, and this chord-form requires little finger stretch and the root is on the bottom.

For those whose inquiring minds wish to know, the four notes of the GM7 chord are: G, B, D, and F-sharp, and last we'll play the G above which will sound complete. This will let us can play four notes up (G, B, D, F#), and then play four notes back down (High-G, F#, D, and B).

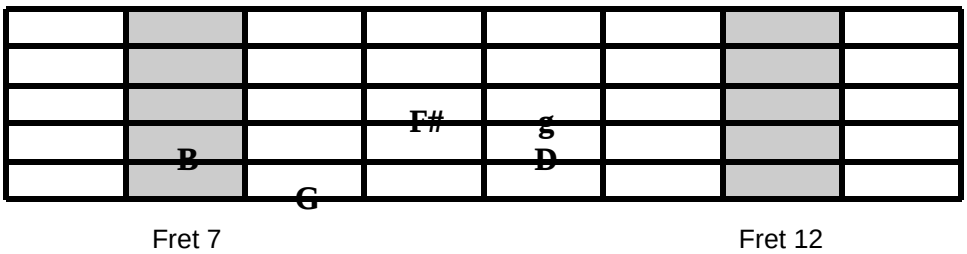
However, for this discussion and all through the Bookmark System, you won't have to think much about the names of notes in a chord. You will have to know the Root (bottom note), but whether or not you immediately know the names of the notes will not matter because you will know the *shape* to play, and things will work out fine.

So let's take a look at the GM7 chord — We'll use Bass-Bottom Megatar for our example. 8-String is identical. If you're playing a Fifths-Bottom instrument, it's the same shape but lying upon the nine holy bass notes where they fall on your strings, so please adapt the graph to fall correctly on your particular instrument's strings.

Bass-Bottom Megatar Fret 7 Position provides these Root Notes



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Notes of GM7 Chord on Bass Strings



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Fingering the GM7 Chord

You'll notice that the two 'G' notes are shown in the fingering diagram as hollow. That's because G is the root of the GM7 chord, and we want to keep track of where the root is.

You'll notice that the lowest G is played with the second finger (shown by the bar symbol), and then you use the first finger (shown by the dot) to play the next note on the string above. (This next note is a B, and it is the 'third' of the chord.)

You'll notice that you use your third finger (shown by the triangle) to play the next note, which is on the same string. (This next note is the D, and it is the 'fifth' of the chord.)

You'll notice that you then go to the next string and use your second finger to play the F# (which is the 'seventh' of the chord), and lastly you use your third finger to play the top G, which is the root of the chord, but because it's at the top of the chord, normally we would call it 'the octave.'

Please try playing this shape.

Strict Fingering, Please

Those of you who are already bass players almost certainly already know this shape and how to play it. However, be aware!

Please use strict fingering to play this shape.

Some bass-players would tend to play the D note with the little finger, mainly just because it's there, and there is also a school of playing that recommends placing one finger at each fret.

But we have that D played with your third finger, because this system uses three fingers on each string for three notes on each string, and saves the little finger for a few special cases.

So for now, please use strict fingering as shown.

Strict fingering is going to pay off for you later. Remember, this system is called the Bookmark System because it enables you to easily keep your place. If you finger it any old way, it will go to hell fast and won't help you at all.

So for now, please finger it exactly as shown. Later, when you've learned the system, if you want to change it, feel free!

Go Slow

If you are new to this instrument, you may have to go very slowly. Too damn bad. That's where you are, so that's exactly where you should begin!

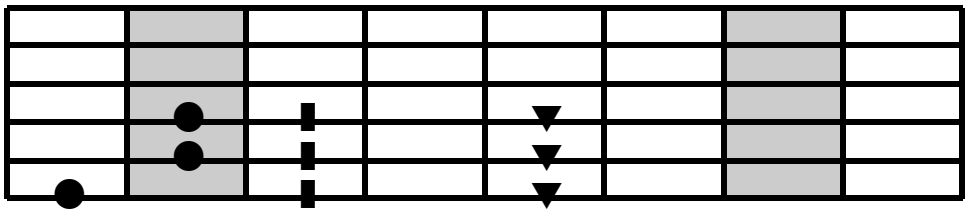
In any event, however, *do not play faster than you can play correct and clean-sounding notes!* Regardless of your skill level, you should not practice wrong notes or bad notes. If you practice bad notes and dirty notes, you will then play bad notes and dirty notes because you've trained yourself to play them!

Only Perfect Practice Makes Perfect

The old saying that Practice Makes Perfect is not quite right.

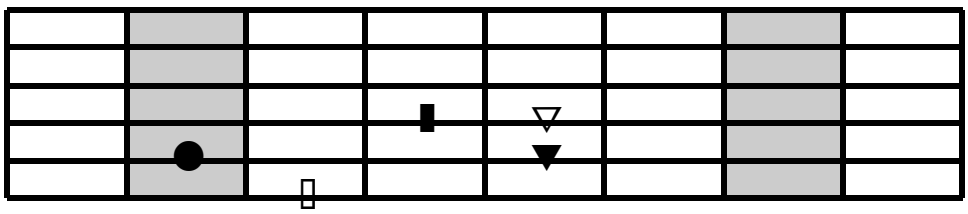
What is really true is that only *Perfect* Practice Makes Perfect. In other words, you're just teach-

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Fingering The Nine Holy Notes



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Fingering GM7 Chord



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

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ing your fingers to tread a certain path. The more they tread the correct path, the more able they become in treading the correct path. But if you let them tread the incorrect path, they are learning to tread the wrong path, which isn't what you want.

Rules of Thumb —

- Only play the exercises as fast as you can execute the notes correctly and cleanly, no faster.
- A good guideline is that you should be able to get 85-90% or more of the notes correct each time through. If you're hitting less than that, your running through fast is teaching your hands the wrong thing — *so slow down!*
- When you have nearly completed the exercise, be sure to end on a good one. If you do a poor one, do another and get it right and then stop. It will feel better.

Practice 'Open and Closed'

There is a great book for high-school drummers learning the 'rudimental' style of snare-drumming. It's a sort of crisp, military sound such as you hear in John Phillip Sousa marches. The book for snare drummers is called 'Stone's Stick Control' and it consists of endless measures of eighth notes, but different combinations of using the left stick or the right stick.

While we promise not to present you with endless measures of eighth notes, there's a great technique given in that book for gaining playing proficiency. It is called 'Opening and Closing.'

Playing an exercise Open and Closed means that you start as slow as molasses, and then you *very very slowly increase your speed* until you attain the fastest you can play without errors flourishing, and then you *very very slowly* decrease your speed back down to the snail's pace.

Posture Matters

While you are doing this, pay particular attention during the slow movements to your whole body. Your posture should be erect and balanced, your arms in correct playing position, and your muscles should not be especially tight.

It may be helpful to imagine that the movement to play the note is actually coming from your arm and wrist, and not only by finger movement.

Your Thumb Doesn't Move

Your thumb should basically stay in one place on the rear of the neck. The thumb may sort of roll as you stretch the fingers forward or back upon the fretboard, but the thumb should not slide around. That is, you should *not* be moving your hand with each note.

This doesn't mean your arm or thumb or wrist should be rigid or uncomfortable. It just means — don't move your hand around. Your fingers *have* to move around, but in this exercise your thumb doesn't have to move, so let it stay in one place and you'll have a nice sense of where your hand is, and that's a good thing.

Play by Touch, not Vision

While you are initially working out the exercise, it's OK to pull the fretboard back against your chest to peek at the fretboard, but then use your left thumb to press the fretboard upright and away from your body, so that you're looking at the back of the neck. Your head should be erect.

Because we are primates with hundreds of thousands of years of danger teaching us to look out!, we have an automatic tendency to use our most reliable sense which for most of us is our vision. (To *see* a tiger across the forest is much better survival than to wait till we can *feel* its fur!)

But although vision is great for lots of things, it is not the best way to play. For example, touch is a much more accurate sense to use.

However, while you are learning, you might feel uncertain or you might play a note wrong and you don't know how that happened. And in that case you will be <u>very tempted</u> to peek.

But realize that peeking is teaching yourself to use your eyes to play, and *that's a lousy way to play!*

For one thing, it's slow.

For another, it won't work on a dark stage.

For another, you can't read your music.

For another, you can't look at the audience.

For another, you'll never notice the cute groupie over in the corner winking at you.

So peek to figure out what you're doing, and then do the exercise *by touch!* After all, this style is called *Touch-Style!*

For those of you who are impatient by nature, this will build your character in a hurry, because it will make you go slower in the beginning. However, learn it correctly, and you can fly later.

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Play On the Fret

Your left-hand fingertips should be striking the string gently, and not in the space between the frets but actually ON the fret. Most of your fingertip will be behind the fret, but you should be able to *feel* the fret beneath your fingertip.

Striking on the fret gives you the best tone, and also avoids sharpening the note by accident. If you allow yourself to strike the string between the frets, your striking finger can actually stretch the string, which bends the pitch up.

Striking directly on the fret sounds the best, and it's the most precision playing, and there's a big plus in that you get feedback. That is, when you're playing on the fret, your fingertip can tell you when you're off-position, and you can correct.

There is no such handy information when you're hitting the string just any old place between the frets. So play on the fret.

To get this for yourself, just experiment with your amp set clean, and listen carefully to the tone and the stability of the pitch of the played note.

Got a Metronome?

When you're first working this out, you may be going very very slowly. And initially you'll get some good results playing 'Open and Closed.'

But after some practice you will be able to play up and down the chord notes smoothly and at a reasonable and musical sounding tempo. As soon as you are playing in any sort of regular rhythm, try using a metronome and begin to concentrate on playing exactly on the beat.

Remember — any good bass player will tell you that it's not how many notes you can play, but instead it's playing the *right* note, and playing it at exactly the *right time.*

So don't be in too much of a hurry to play the pattern real fast. What is more important is that you play it with perfect rhythm, at whatever speed you can play correctly.

Slow and Legato

Very soon we'll get to playing notes with syncopation to make things more interesting, but initially play them very boring — right on the beat and holding the note out for the full duration.

How Long, O Lord?

This first time, you might have to spend some time getting it right, but basically you're ready for the next step when you can play this one chord up and down in a steady rhythm — without looking, without missing notes, and with good posture.

Attaining this level of proficiency might be slow, or it might just take a few minutes. It depends upon your skills and old experience.

When you can do that, let's try the right hand on the melody strings ...

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Playing GM7 on Melody Strings

Does the graph below look, somehow, familiar? By Golly, it's exactly the same as the bass hand! Wow! Is that lucky, or what?

Three Types of People

In the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, sometimes just called 'NLP', the gurus say that most folks have a favorite sense, and that folks use this most-trusted sense as their model inside their minds for how they see the world and figure things out.

The vast majority of us use *vision* as the most effortless way to 'model' things inside our head. That is, most of us find it easiest to 'view' or 'see how things look' inside our head as a way to figure out the world.

Even though musicians deal with auditory things, less of us use *audition* as the most effortless model inside the head, and even fewer use the *tactile* sense (touch) as the primary mental model.

Whether or not the NLP gurus are correct, it's an observable fact that if you can picture the *shape* of the chord, then you can 'see' your fingers playing it, even if your eyes are looking at the back of the instrument's neck (as they should be!).

Try it and you'll 'see'.

One Hand Teaches the Other!

Oddly enough, you will discover that when one hand has learned how to do something, the other hand almost knows already! Meaning that teaching your left hand to play this identical pattern on the bass strings somehow magically reduces the time required for your right hand to learn it.

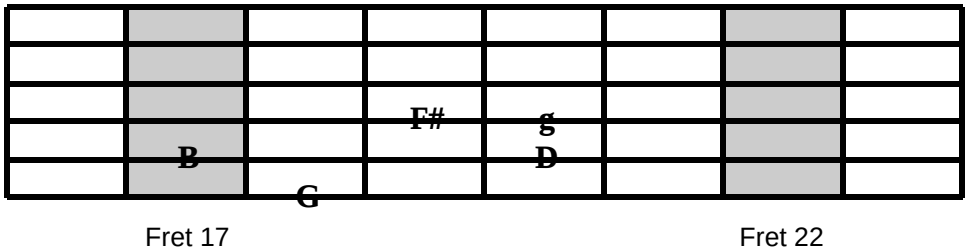
And so your next task is to play the GM7 chord notes with your right hand on the Melody strings.

Please use the same recommendations from the previous pages about keeping correct posture, relaxed muscles, thumb in one place on the rear of the neck, head upright, and using the fingers to 'feel' the notes rather than looking at the keyboard. (But of course, a quick peek to initially place your fingers is fine.)

Rules of Thumb —

- Use VISION to picture the chord shape in your mind, but
- Use TOUCH to feel where the notes are and to play them, and
- Use EARS to hear how well you're succeeding!

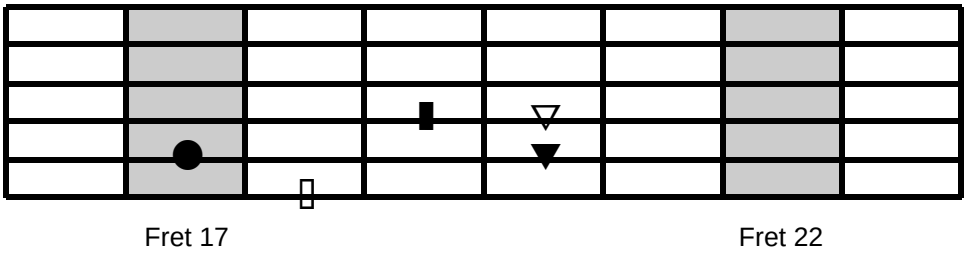
Bass-Bottom Megatar — GM7 on the Melody Strings



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Right-Hand Fingering GM7



Bass-Bottom Megatar is shown as our example. A Fifths-Bottom instrument has identical *melody* strings. Playing 8-String Bass? Adapt the graph to the correct position on your instrument.

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Playing GM7 with Both Hands

You may have to start slow, but many of you are going to be very surprised how amazingly easy it is to play the same chord with both hands.

We've placed graphs below showing the fingering for both bass and melody notes. We've used the Bass-Bottom Megatar as our example.

(This means that players of Fifths-Bottom instruments will need to adapt the graph to the correct position on their instrument.)

Start Slow, and Play by Touch ...

- After initially peeking at the fretboard to place the second finger of each hand on the initial 'G' note, try tapping both second fingers at the same time. Both are playing the 'G' note shown on the graphs below as the lowest note.

  (Note to players of Fifths-Bottom instruments — with your bass hand, you'll be actually playing the *highest*-pitched G, but that's fine. For our discussion we'll refer to it as 'Low G' as it's the lowest positioned on the graph printed on this page. Your instrument will sound a bit unusual as you play both hands together, but that's OK as well, because the method will still take you where you need to go.)
- When you can tap the two Low-G notes at the same time, feel with your left hand first finger for the lowest-pitched note on the next string — as per the graph. (It's the note 'B'.)

  Then feel with your right hand first finger for the lowest-pitched note ('B') on the next string — as shown on the graph.
- Now with both first fingers, tap simultaneously on this second chord note. Both fingers will be tapping on a 'B', and your ears will tell you that they're playing the same note.

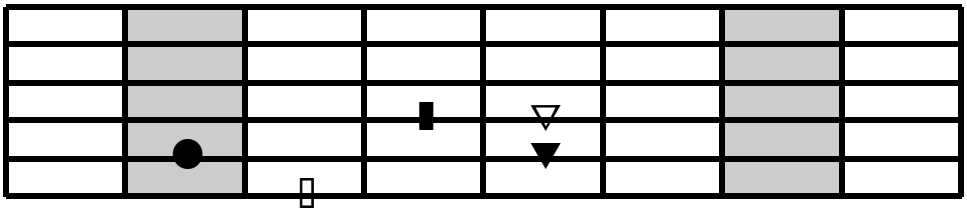
  Before you go on, go back to tapping both second fingers on the Low-G note, then repeat tapping both first fingers on the B-note.
- Now try tapping 1-2-3-4 on the Low-G with second finger, and then tapping 1-2-3-4 on the B-note with first finger. Back & forth.
- When you can do this comfortably, try going from the B-note to the third chord note which is a D-note, played with the third finger of each hand as shown on the graph.
- Then try playing 1-2-3-4 on G, then 1-2-3-4 on B, then 1-2-3-4 on D, then 1-2-3-4 on B, and repeat, using the fingering just as shown.
- When you can do this, add the F# note on the next string using your second fingers. Up & down.
- When you can do this, add the final High-G on the top of the graph, and now you can play up and down the entire chord. (Fifths-Bottom instrument guys, the bass G on the 'top' of the bass graph is actually your lowest-pitched G, but that's OK.)

Congratulations!

You are playing the GM7 chord note by note.

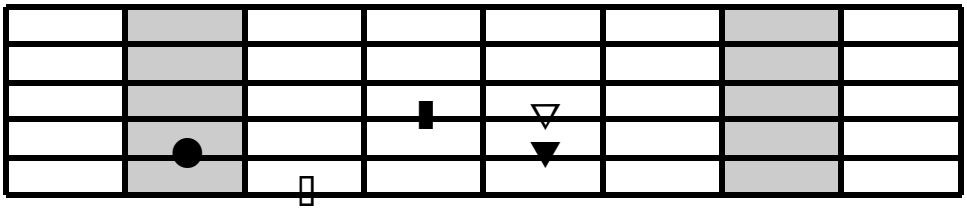
You are also playing simultaneously with both hands —something most bass players cannot do!

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Right-Hand Fingering GM7



Fret 17 Fret 22

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Fingering GM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

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Let's Try Two Chords!

If you can play the GM7 chord up and down in a steady tempo with nearly all the notes sounding OK, then we'll try our first 'Chord Progression.'

Actually, it doesn't seem right to call this a 'Progression' because it doesn't have much sense of going someplace. It changes, but doesn't much 'arrive.'

So without going into much theory, let's just refer to this two-chord thing as a 'Chord Alternation.'

For this next step in developing the Master Exercise, we're going to alternate between two chords, first the GM7 chord that you know, and then the C Major Seven chord.

Learning the CM7 Chord

As you can imagine, our next step is to learn the CM7 Chord. Therefore, we've shown it below.

We've again used the Bass-Bottom Megatar as our example. 8-String Bass players will have to place the melody notes differently on their neck. Fifths-Bottom instruments will have to place the bass notes differently on their neck, but the pattern will be played and fingered exactly the same.

What? The Root's in the Middle!

As you look at the graph, you'll notice that the hollow symbol which indicates the root of the chord is not located at the bottom of the graph.

Here is our first consequence of choosing to play *in one place*. The Root of any 'C' chord is the note 'C', which just doesn't happen to occur on the lowest string in the area of our nine chosen notes. And therefore we're going to have to play that 'C' where it *does* occur, which is on the middle of the three strings which we are using.

Does this matter?

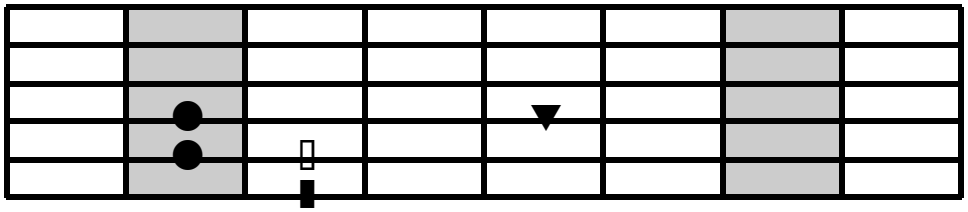
Not really. When you play this pattern up and down from the lowest string to the highest string, it will have a different character than the GM7, but for our learning purposes, and for most musical applications it will work fine. Later on, when you take up "Moving Chords" you might just move the entire GM7 shape to a different three strings to get the same sound. In fact, for most musicians that 'moving' approach is usually more intuitive and apparent. But for now, we're not learning a Moving System, we're using a Fixed System, which will pay big dividends in your rapid learning to play with musical results.

So you still play the pattern with fingering as shown on the graph. You may have to feel the individual notes and go slowly as you did when learning GM7 but your goal is the same — to smoothly play 1-2-3-4 up and then 1-2-3-4 down.

To be specific, your first note is second finger on lowest-graphed string (the note is 'G' which is the 'fifth' of the CM7 chord). Your second note is first finger on second string (playing 'B' which is the 'seventh' of the CM7 chord). Your third note is second finger on same string (playing 'C' the root of CM7 chord). Your next note is first finger on next string (playing 'E' which is the 'third' of CM7 chord). Your highest note is third finger on same string (playing 'G' again which is the 'fifth' of CM7 chord).

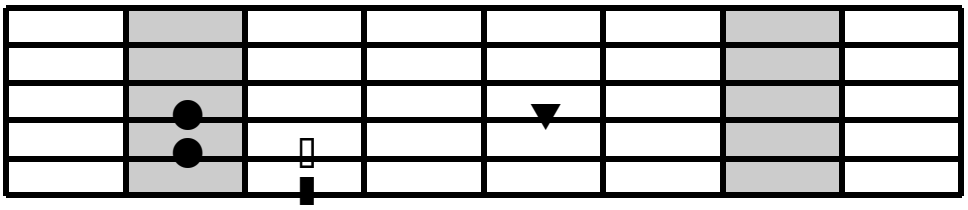
Try it, up and down.

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Right-Hand Fingering CM7



Fret 17 Fret 22

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Fingering CM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

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Observe — the Shapes are Different!

The alert student will have noticed that the Shape of the GM7 is different from the Shape of the CM7.

This is an important and handy fact about the Bookmark System.

You will remember that, using the Nine Notes in one position, we are going to learn Seven Chords. Right now we'll tell you that the Seven Chords we're going to learn are — AM7, BM7, CM7, DM7, EM7, FM7, and GM7.

And your first important fact about these seven chords is that *every one of them has a different and very distinctive shape* when played on our nine notes.

So you will learn, in an easy manner, these seven chords one at a time. And in a short time you can play any of these seven chords and its shape will be obvious to you.

This will not be difficult. There are only seven of them to learn!

Now here's the really wonderful part …

Once you know a chord's distinctive shape, you can slightly modify it to create other chords you'll need. For example, from CM7 you can move one note to get C7. Move one more note to get C minor 7. And move one more note to get C minor 7 flat 5. And what's really great is that, the chord still keeps its distinctive shape as compared to the other chords.

Can You Describe the Shapes?

As a way to help you recognize the chord by shape, let's describe the shape. We might call the GM7 shape a 'diamond'

But what would we call the CM7 shape?

What would *you* call it?

Try Alternating GM7 and CM7

Once you can play the CM7 chord tones up and down, try playing the two chords in alternation — first the GM7 (several times), and then the CM7 (several times), then back to GM7 (several times), and repeat.

You will discover that you'll make less errors and thus produce better finger-training if you play each chord several times before changing to the other. It allows your fingers to 'groove in' to the shape and the motion.

If, early on, you attempt to play the GM7 once and then the CM7 once, and back and forth like that, unless you are already very skilled, you will see your errors multiply and your sense of certainty diminish.

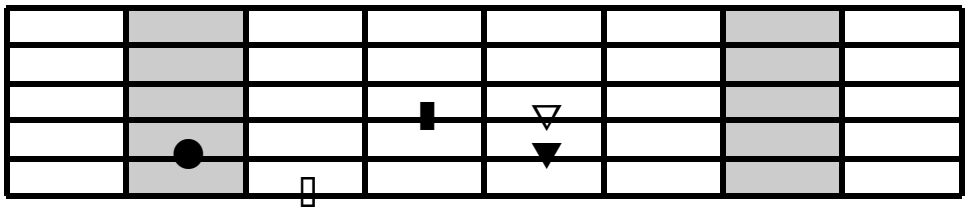
So the question is: How many times to play each chord before switching?

The answer is: Find the lowest number of times on each chord which keeps your errors low.

For example, you might play GM7 up and down four times, and then CM7 up and down four times. Then when you can do this smoothly without errors, try playing GM7 up and down twice and then CM7 up and down twice.

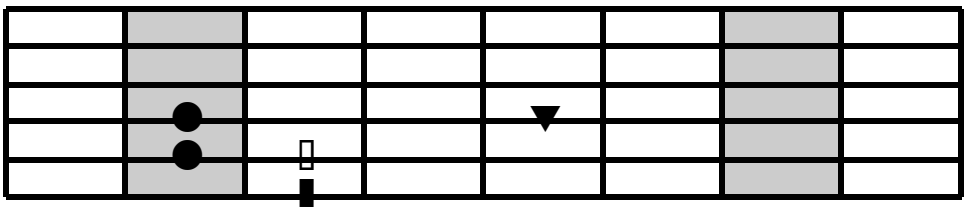
Eventually you'll be able to play GM7 up and down once, then CM7 up and down once, and repeat. But practice this way only when you can do it without errors. If you start getting more errors, then back up to more repetitions of each chord.

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Fingering GM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand Fingering CM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

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One Hand and then Two Hands

You've probably already worked it out for yourself, but in doing the GM7-CM7 alternation you will probably try it first with your left hand on bass notes, and then try it right hand on melody notes, and then both hands together.

As always, go as slow as needed so that your hands and fingers feel comfortable, and you have a feeling of calm doing the exercise. Your fingers and hands, not your head, will tell you how fast to go with this feeling of comfortable certainty.

Right on! And Left on, too!

What Are these Chords?

The technical among you already know the answer but any newcomer may be asking why we combine these two particular chords.

Here's the scoop —

Assuming for a moment that we are playing a song 'in the key of G'. Or we might say that we're playing a song 'with a key-center of G.'

These phrases mean that we're playing a song (or part of a song) where the main note is G, and we'll play some other notes and chords which sound more jarring or somehow different and then we'll tend to come back to the G and it will sound somewhat complete and final.

If we are in the key of G, then we are generally playing in the 'Major Scale' of G. Which means that when we play up and down the seven notes G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, and G that it will sound correct, and it will sound like it goes with the GM7 chord.

In that scheme of things you'll notice that C is the fourth scale note, and therefore the chord built upon C with a C-Root is a 'Fourth Chord'.

Now it happens that if you build a chord on C, using only the scale notes in our key-center of G, you just so happen to come up with a C Major Seven chord. (If you cannot immediately see why that's true, don't be concerned as this will all be handled more fully later on.)

Now by playing GM7 which is ON the key center, and then playing CM7 which we might describe as 'floating OFF' the key center, you get a sense of motion.

This particular motion doesn't seem to much arrive at anywhere, and it's not a 'satisfying' type of motion, but we'll learn more satisfying chord movements later.

For right now, this is a very simple chord alternation which for most folks will feel like being ON, and then floating OFF and then being ON, and then floating OFF, and so on.

It's a 'One - Four' Alternation

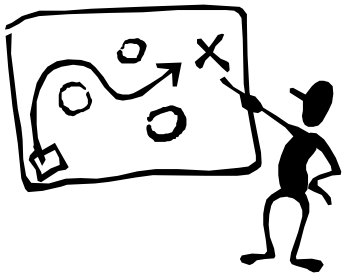
Technically, you are playing the One Major Seven chord (GM7), and the Four Major Seven Chord (CM7). The correct technical shorthand notation for this is using roman numerals thus:

IM7 — IVM7 — IM7 — IVM7, etc

When we go on to play in other keys, although the notes will change and the chord names will change, when you play in any key the IM7 and then the IVM7 back and forth it will have this same ON — floating OFF — ON — floating OFF feeling to the alternation.

In a similar fashion, when we go on to more complicated 'chord progressions', each progression has a certain feeling of tension and resolution to your ear, even if you're playing the same sequence in a different key center.

And for you, you technical dude, just keep on practicing your IM7-IVM7 alternation till you're smooth at it.



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Let's Try Another Chord-Pair

The IM7-IVM7 progression can also be referred to as the I-IV progression for our purposes here.

Since you have mastered playing the I-IV progression in the key-center of G, using the GM7 one-chord and the CM7 four-chord, the next step is to play the same I-IV alternation in another key center.

We could just pick any old key center and work out what the I-chord and the IV-chord are, but let's make it easy on ourselves by choosing our next key center so that we only have to learn one new chord for the next step.

We'll have a choice of two new key-centers. Either one will only require us to learn one new chord.

For example, we could choose the key of D, and then the DM7 chord would be the I-chord, and our old familiar GM7 chord would be the IV-chord in that key. And then we could play DM7—GM7 back and forth for the I-IV alternation in the key of D.

Or for example, we could choose the key of C, and now the CM7 chord which we know would become the I-chord in the key of C. Then we'd learn a new FM7 chord to be the IV-chord.

And that's the one we'll choose next.

The key-center of C is easy to study because it has no sharps nor flats. In fact, the Nine Holy Notes are technically in the key of C because none of the nine notes as originally given have any sharps or flats.

Back when we were playing in the key-center of G, we sharped the F note because in fact the key of G does have one sharp and that one sharp is F#. Sharping that F-note in the key of G is required to make playing a scale up from G sound correct as a 'major scale.' (If this is news to you, it's OK if you don't yet know all the rules and regulations for keys and sharps and flats, because all this will become clear as you progress in your learning.)

But now that we're going to go to the key of C, there will be no sharps nor flats.

The 'major scale' for the key of C therefore consists of the notes of C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C.

Pretty simple.

Also, it's pretty simple to see that the fourth note in this scale is the note F.

That means that the IV-chord will be F-chord.

Since we know that, in a major scale, the IV-chord is a Major Seven chord, then we know that the F-chord is going to be FM7.

An Insider's Tip

We'll now let you in on a little secret ...

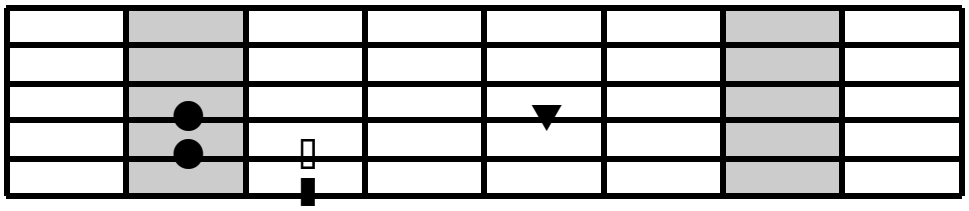
The reason we are initially presenting the I-IV alternation around the keys is that it means that you only initially have to learn the Major Seven chords. (You don't have to initially bother with 'Dominant Seven' or 'Minor Seven' or 'Minor Seven Flat Five' chords — isn't that great!)

Now there are only seven 'Major Seventh' chords, not because they're called 'Seventh' chords but because there are only seven named notes: A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

Now if you would be so kind, please learn the FM7 chord with fingering shown below, and then learn the CM7—FM7 alternation.

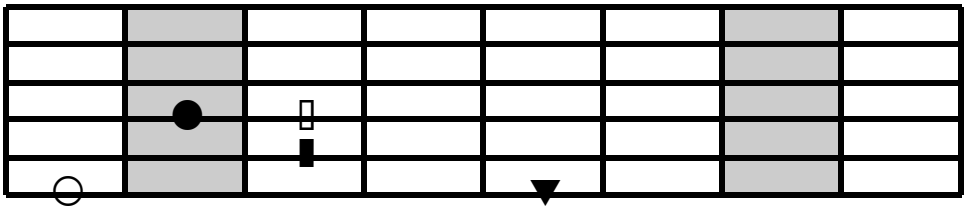
Once that's done, you will only have four Major Seventh chords left to learn!

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7 (IM7 in C)



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand FM7 (IVM7 in C)



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
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4 = X
Root = Hollow

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Learn all Seven Major-7 chords

We will now present all seven 'Major Seventh' chord shapes. For right now we don't care much about the names of the notes. All we care about is —

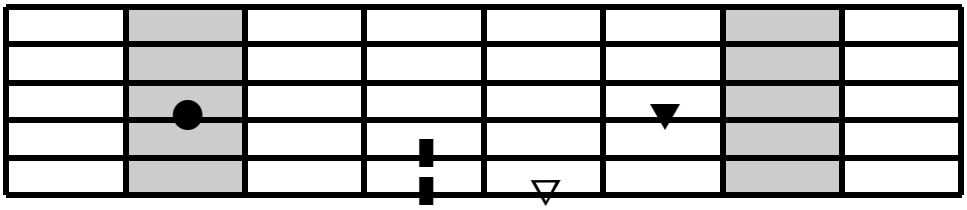
1. The shape of the chord form,
2. The fingering of the chord-form, and
3. Which note is the Root.

Our chart makes it easy. The shape is shown. The fingering is shown. The Root is shown.

As before, our example will be Bass-Bottom Megatar, and showing only the bass strings (because the pattern and fingering is identically shaped on the melody strings). As before, folks playing 8-String Bass or Fifths-Bottom instruments please play the identical note fingering upon the Nine Holy Notes as they fall upon the neck of your instrument.

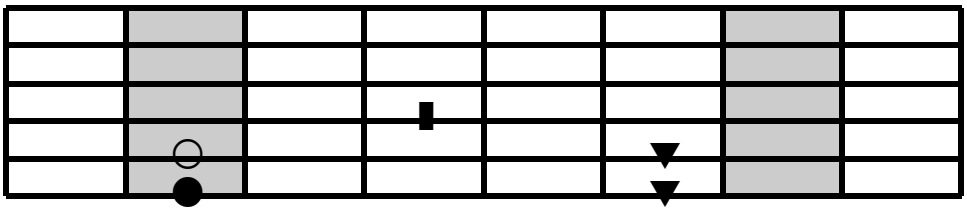
Here they are —

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand AM7



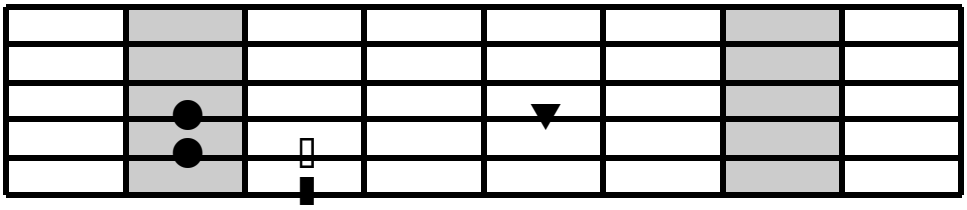
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand BM7



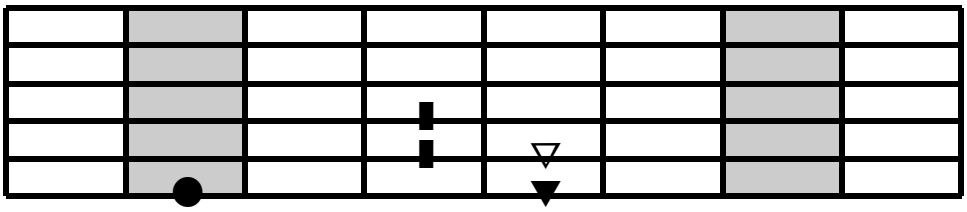
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand DM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

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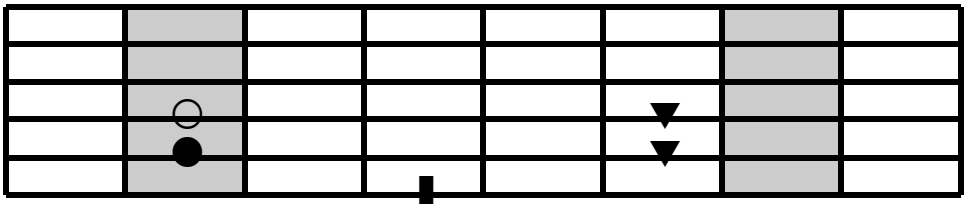
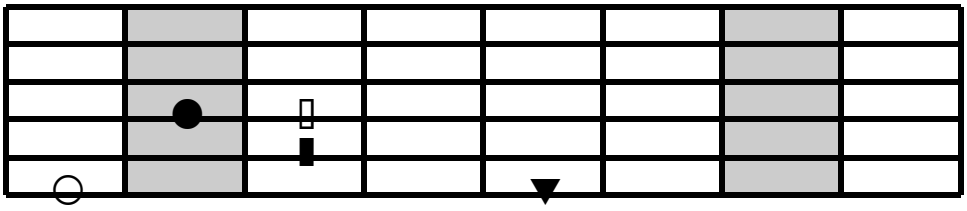
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand EM7



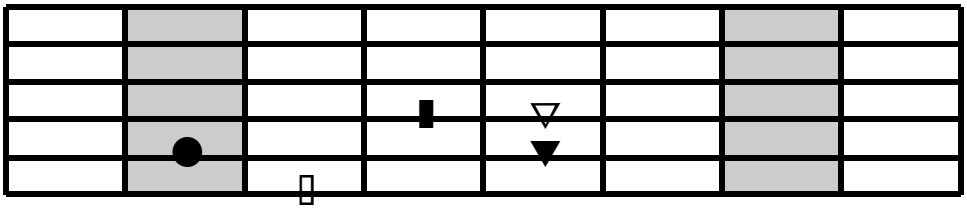
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand FM7



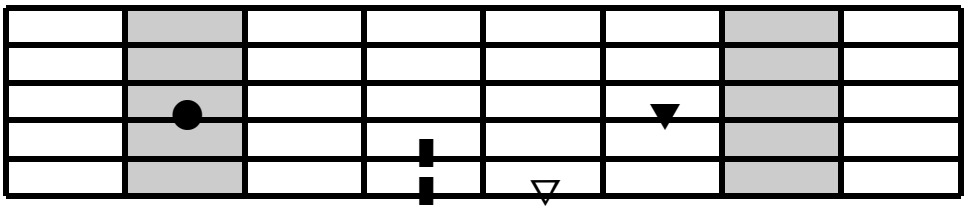
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand GM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand AM7 (again)



Fret 7 Fret 12

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What Patterns do you see?

Do you see how the Root moves up, as you go from AM7 to BM7 to CM7 to DM7 to EM7 to FM7, to GM7, and finally up to AM7 again?

Do any of the pattern-shapes suggest a description to you? For example, we think the B-shape is like a 'Hill', and we think the E-Shape is a 'Cup'.

Please examine the chord shapes thoughtfully and see if any of these shapes suggest an obvious description of the shape. If so, please pencil the descriptive word near the graph. The descriptive word will help you initially remember that the BM7 is the 'hill-shaped one,' and so on.

Next, going slowly and carefully and using the fingering as given, please try fingering these different chord shapes, just to gain some familiarity with them.

Next, we'll make some I-IV Alternations into the first version of your Master Exercise ...

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The Almost Master Exercise, part one

Below you'll see a table which expresses in a very compact form the most common I-IV alternations. There are a few others, using sharps and flats, but this short list is just to familiarize you and so we were able to avoid all the sharps and flats except that you'll have to play BbM7 on one of them.

So it raises a question: You have a chart for playing BM7 but how do you play BbM7?

And the answer is: Play BM7 with all of your fingers moved one fret toward the tuners! Played in place as shown on the graph it's BM7. Played one fret toward the tuners (or you could say with all the notes flat), it's BbM7.

Now please learn to play the following seven I-IV Alternations. As before, as needed learn each hand, then play both hands simultaneously, legato and only as fast as avoids errors. Play them Open and Closed, and then at a moderate tempo.

After you learn these, we'll add the flat ones.

	IM7	IM7	IVM7	IVM7
(key of A)	AM7	AM7	DM7	DM7
(key of D)	DM7	DM7	GM7	GM7
(key of G)	GM7	GM7	CM7	CM7
(key of C)	CM7	CM7	FM7	FM7
(key of F)	FM7	FM7	BbM7	BbM7
(key of B)	BM7	BM7	EM7	EM7
(key of E)	EM7	EM7	AM7	AM7

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The Almost Master Exercise, part two

Below you'll see a table very much like the last one, but arranged a little differently, and it's longer.

This here is the *real* table.

This table has the I-IV Alternations listed in a different order, and there are more of them.

This different order is, as you will see, just a case of dropping one whole step on each succeeding exercise. As you'll see, dropping a whole step from C gives you Bb, and dropping a whole step from Bb gives you Ab, and dropping a whole step from Ab gives you Gb, and dropping a whole step from Gb gives you E, and dropping a whole step from E gives you D, and if you dropped a whole step from D it would bring you back to C.

As it turns out, those six keys are about half of all possible keys. The other keys are listed in the second part of the table, and these exercises drop a whole step starting from G, down through F, Eb, Db, B, A, and back to G.

There are no sharp chords in this exercise. Of course, some sharp chords do appear in music, but because of the way horns (like trumpets and saxophones) work, the flat keys are a little more popular. That is, you will see folks play in Bb a lot more often than in the identical-sounding A# key.

So for now, just count yourself lucky that you only have flat chords to deal with, and as on the previous exercise, to play a flat chord just play the equivalent 'natural' chord one fret lower

Give it a try …

	IM7	IM7	IVM7	IVM7
	CM7	CM7	FM7	FM7
	BbM7	BbM7	EbM7	EbM7
	AbM7	AbM7	DbM7	DbM7
	GbM7	GbM7	CbM7	CbM7
	EM7	EM7	AM7	AM7
	DM7	DM7	GM7	GM7
	———	———	———	———
	GM7	GM7	CM7	CM7
	FM7	FM7	BbM7	BbM7
	EbM7	EbM7	AbM7	AbM7
	DbM7	DbM7	GbM7	GbM7
	BM7	BM7	EM7	EM7
	AM7	AM7	DM7	DM7

The Oddity of CbM7 …

The astute student will have noticed the 'CbM7' on the fourth line and pondered the fact that since Cb would be the same note as 'B' then a CbM7 would have to contain the same notes as a BM7.

And you are correct. However, do not substitute a BM7 in the exercise. Here's why —

You are training your hands to operate automatically and with precision. And what is going to happen as you are reading music in that key of Gb is that the scale contains the notes Gb, Ab, Bb, Cb, Db, Eb, F, and Gb. To list the notes any other way would require that two notes would have the same letter name (such as for example Bb for the third note and B for the fourth note). This is forbidden in music notation. It's considered less confusing to have a chord called CbM7.

Who are we to gainsay the gurus of Music Theory? So just play it as CbM7, meaning the CM7 shape moved one fret lower toward the tuners.

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The Secret Mystery (Shhh!)

Hidden in the preceding chart (but not very hidden) are a couple of patterns, but as a special treat we'll not spill the beans here.

Some people like puzzles, so we'll leave the puzzle of the Twice-As-Long chart to those folks who like puzzles, as a kind of bonus or special treat.

To see the interesting puzzle, on the first half of the chart please just read all the chord symbols in turn: CM7, FM7, BbM7, EbM7, and so on.

Then try the same thing on the second half of the chart.

Any similarity?

Any difference?

Now, why?

(If this makes no sense to you, or if you just don't give a damn, that's OK too, as this is just for people interested in music theory and puzzles.)

Why the 'Almost Master Exercise'?

The preceding chart is not quite the Master Exercise, but we only need one missing part to get to the real Master Exercise.

The main problem is that these 'Alternations' just don't cut it as a 'Chord Progression' because there's only a slight sense of progression.

To cut the suspense short, we'll just tell you.

What we need is a good old Dominant 7 chord, which is often just called a plain 'seventh chord.'

So you can hear what's missing, please play the following sequence:

GM7— CM7— GM7— DM7

It sounds *kind* of interesting, and *kind* of right, but not quite. When you hit the DM7, doesn't it sound like you suddenly went around a corner or zoomed to the left somehow? Doesn't the DM7 sound 'sort of not right?'

We think it does. Most musicians would think it sounds somehow wrong.

But we can fix that.

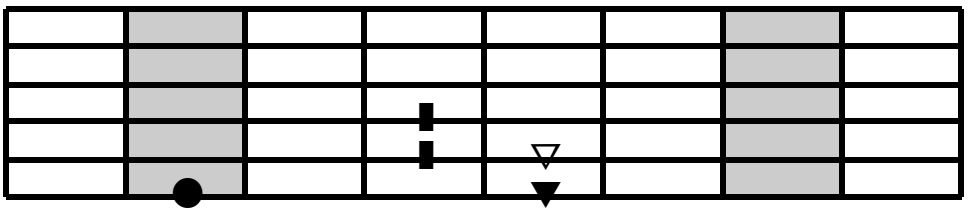
Take a look at the graph below for a 'D7' chord. You'll notice that only one note is different from the 'DM7' chord. In the DM7 there is a C# note, and in the D7 note you find a C-natural instead.

Try playing the D7, and then try playing the following sequence:

GM7— CM7— GM7— D7

We think you'll agree that it sounds more 'right.' Now can you think of any reason that might be true?

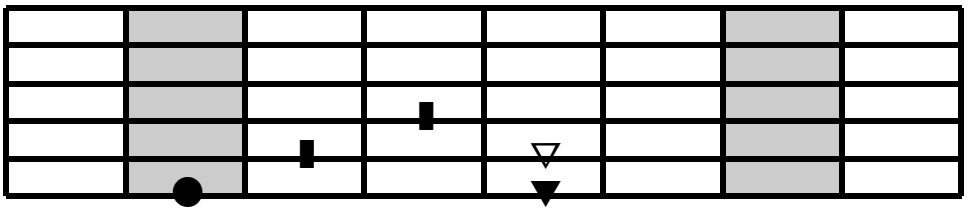
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand DM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

This is a "Major Seventh" Chord

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand D7



Fret 7 Fret 12

This is a "Seventh" Chord

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The Mystery of the D7 Chord

On the first chart below, we've marked the notes of all three chords GM7, CM7, and D7. The notes that are part of the GM7 chord we've marked with a ❑.

The notes that form CM7 we've marked with a ◆. And the notes that form D7 we've marked with a ☯.

Notice how many fall on the same notes. The A note only occurs in the D7-chord, and the E-note only occurs in the CM7-chord, but all the other notes occur in at least two of the three chords.

Play the notes below.

Holy cow! It's a G Major scale!

But of course!

The GM7 is the I-chord, the CM7 is the IV-chord, and the D7 is the V-chord. The V chord must be a V7 to fit the scale.

Do you see that the C# of DM7 didn't fit?

That's why D7 sounds 'right' and DM7 doesn't.

You can See the Scale in the Chords

A few pages back, we mentioned that it would be possible to study scales first and then extract chords from the scales, but that we thought it best to study chords first because along the way you'd be able to see the scale without even trying.

Perhaps you can see what we mean.

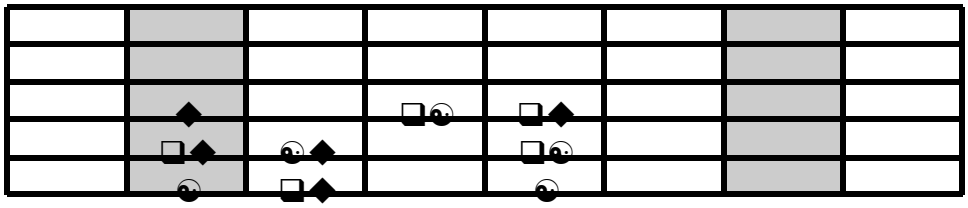
When you play a simple chord progression such as I— IV— I— V, just by observing which notes have been played, you can *see* the shape of the scale that goes with the I-chord.

In this example, you played GM7— CM7 — GM7 — D7 and could then *automatically see* the scale notes of G.

We're not going to use this fact much at present.

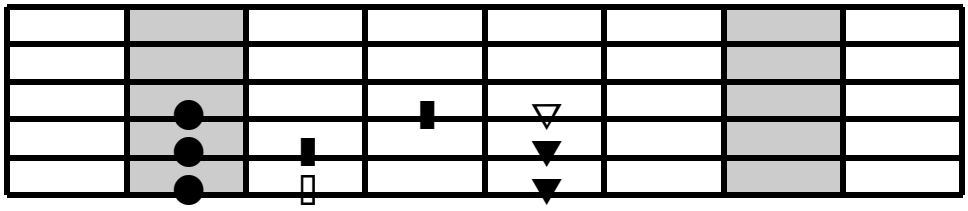
What we're really interested in is that we need to learn the plain 'Seventh Chords', also called 'Dominant Seventh Chords', so that we can play more interesting chord progressions.

Megatar — Left-Hand GM7(❑), CM7(◆), & D7(☯) Notes



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — the G Major scale



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

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How Chords are Built

We think that the easiest way to actually 'see' scales and chords is to look at a piano keyboard. If you look at a keyboard, and just pay attention to the white keys, you will see that they're laid out in a very simple system —

A— B— C— D— E— F— G

To make a simple chord you'd start on some white note and play every other white note, such as A, C, E, and G. However, because there's no black key between B and C, nor between E and F, it makes these various 'white note' chords have different types of sounds, though we aren't going to get into that just now.

However, we can certainly use the simple image of a piano keyboard, and playing every other white key to explain how the chord tones are named.

Let's pretend you were starting on the note 'D', and you call the D-note the 'one' of the scale. Then the E would be the second note, and the 'F' would be the 'third' note.

The G would be the fourth note, and the 'A' would be the 'fifth' note.

The B would be the sixth note, and the 'C' would be the 'seventh' note.

All right. Now let's just take every other note to spell out a chord. We'll illustrate this from the bottom up. This is the conventional way to do it because it models the way we notate notes on the treble and bass clefs in music. So our chord would look like this —

C	the 'seventh' of the chord
A	the 'fifth' of the chord
F	the 'third' of the chord
D	the one (or 'root') of the chord

We know this is *some sort* of D chord with a seventh. In fact, just as it happens to fall on the white piano keys, it would be a 'D Minor Seventh,' but if we just make the F into an F#, this chord would become the very D7 we've been talking about.

The Difference between DM7 and D7

What is the difference between these two chords? You can see from the chart that the DM7 has a C# note , and the D7 has a C-natural note.

You can see on the graph that the C# or the C-natural is the note just below the Root of D. This means that the C# or the C-natural is the 'seventh' of the chord.

So the difference between DM7 and D7 is that DM7 has a seventh which is only one half-step (one fret) lower than D. This kind of seventh is called a 'Major Seventh' and we can handily call the DM7 chord a 'D Major Seventh' chord.

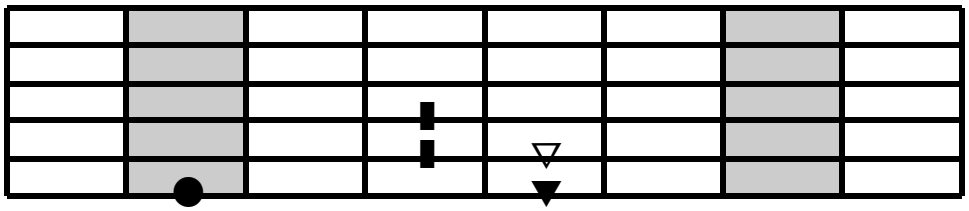
In the D7 chord we have a seventh which is *two* half-steps (two frets) below the D, or you can say it's a *whole-step* below the D. This kind of seventh is called a 'Dominant Seventh' or just a 'Seven', and that's why the we call the D7 chord a 'D Seven Chord.'

If you had been playing in the key of D Major, then the DM7 would have been your I-chord and the Major Seventh would fit in. But in the key of G, the D-chord is the five-chord, and must be a D7 in order to fit in the G Major scale.

We haven't really fully explained the why of all this, but you can see that it's true.

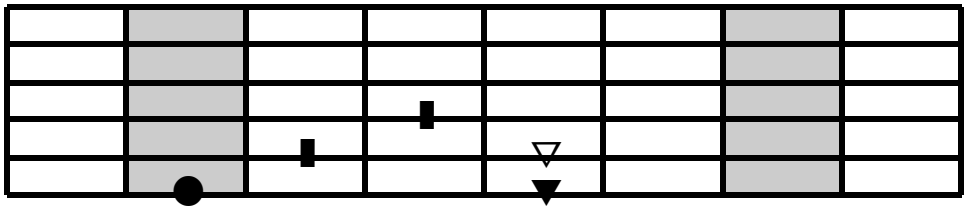
It's got to be D7 to fit. And when you play it that way, it sounds right.

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand DM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand D7



Fret 7 Fret 12

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Making Dominant-Seventh Chords from Major-Seventh Chords

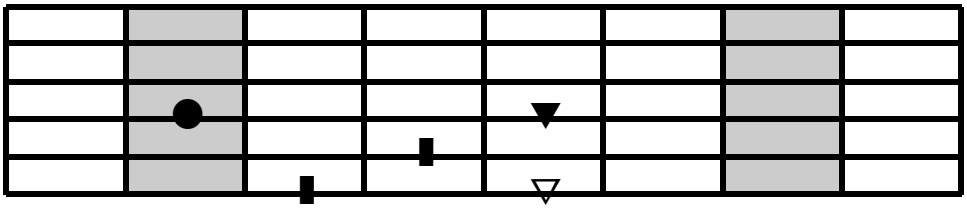
Before we give you the complete set of Dominant Seven chords (or just 'Seven Chords'), please go back to the two pages where all the Major Seventh chords are given.

Then see how easy it is to make Seven Chords from Major-Seven Chords —

1. Find the root, and then
2. Find the next lower-pitched note below the root, which has *got to be* the seventh of the chord. Since it's a "Major Seven' chord, the seventh should be just one half-step below the root. And then
3. Very lightly just pencil the seventh one half-step (one fret) lower, and after you've done this with all of the Major Seven chords then
4. Compare your penciled solutions with the Dominant Seven Chords as we present them here …

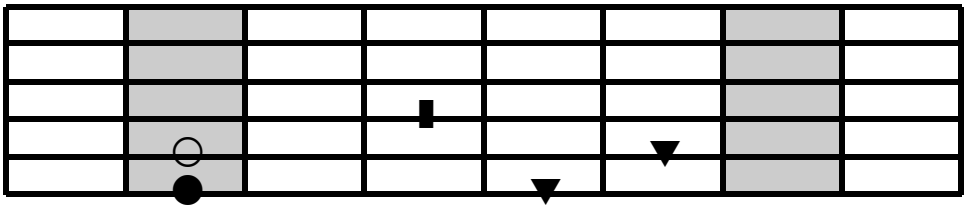
You'll notice on the first chord, that *two* notes move. That's because the seventh of the chord appears *twice* in this chord shape.

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand A7



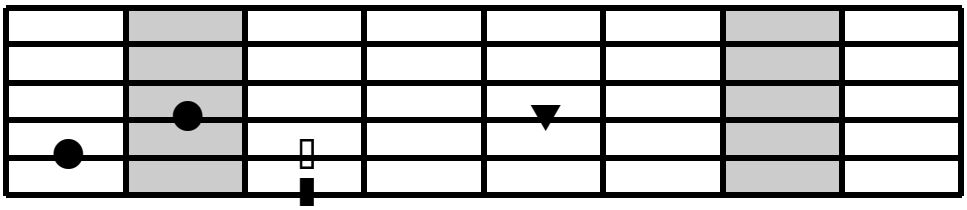
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand B7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand C7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

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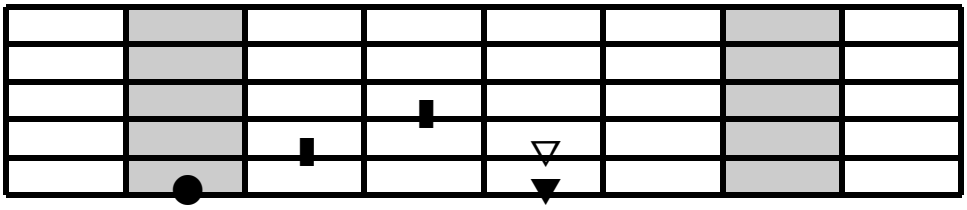
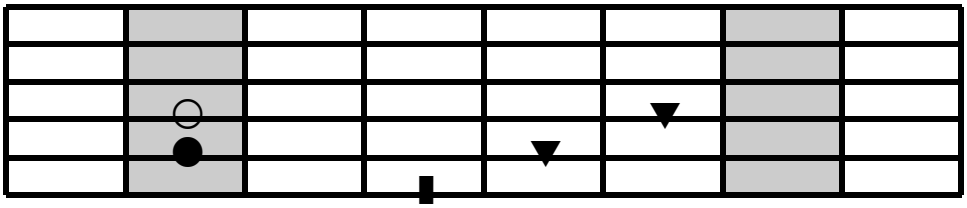
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand D7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand E7

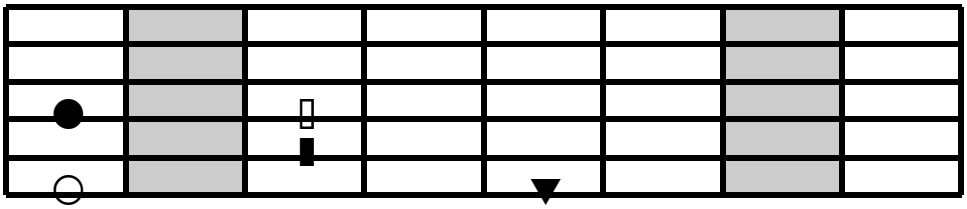


Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

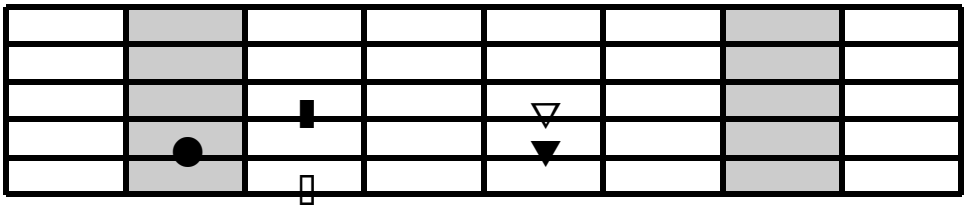
1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand F7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand G7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Learning the Seven Chords

Now you have the seven Dominant Seventh or Seven Chords. Familiarize your fingers with them. A good way to do that is to play the Major Seven and then the Seven Chord, like this —

GM7 — G7 — GM7 — G7 etc

As surely you can imagine by now, you try this with your left hand, then with your right hand, and then try it with both hands simultaneously. And just like any exercise, play by touch, go slow at first, make sure nearly all notes are correct and if there are lots of errors then slow down. Keep good posture and feel the frets beneath your fingertips, which should be playing ON the frets.

When you've familiarized yourself with the Seventh Chords, we'll work them into the Master Exercise, which is next.

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The Master Exercise, Part One

In its simplest form, the Master Exercise consists of one Chord Progression, and the Chords consist of arpeggiated notes done simultaneously with both hands.

When you can do the arpeggiation with both hands easily, you use rhythmic variations in your right and left hand, and thus generate many musical ways to play what we call Rhythm Bass.

In addition, the Master Exercise sets the stage for improvising solos, doing walking bass, and other musically-useful techniques.

The first Master Exercise sequence is given concisely in the table below. This Chord Progression we call the 'Folk Cycle' because you can find it occurring in a number of Folk Songs.

Try this exercise in the usual way. First one hand, then the other, then both hands simultaneously arpeggiating the chords up and down, and moving through the progression in a rhythmic manner.

Slow at first, then up to the speed where you can avoid nearly all errors. Repeat each chord multiple times as needed to get smooth.

Smooth and rhythmic is important. Raw speed is not.

You smooth, man!

The Folk Cycle

Day of the Month	I Chord (Root)	IV Chord	I Chord (Root)	V Chord
	CM7	FM7	CM7	G7
	BbM7	EbM7	BbM7	F7
	AbM7	DbM7	AbM7	Eb7
	GbM7	CbM7	GbM7	Db7
	EM7	AM7	EM7	B7
	DM7	GM7	DM7	A7
	———	———	———	———
	GM7	CM7	GM7	D7
	FM7	BbM7	FM7	C7
	EbM7	AbM7	EbM7	Bb7
	DbM7	GbM7	DbM7	Ab7
	BM7	EM7	BM7	F#7
	AM7	DM7	AM7	E7

The 'Day of the Month' Column

Once you can play this exercise, you may want to set up a schedule for daily warm up. Since we don't know whether your speed requires two weeks per line or one day per six lines, this has been left for you to pencil in as you wish.

Our First Sharp Chord — F#7

At last! A sharp chord!

We'd guess you know how to play the F#7 chord. Probably you've already guessed that you just play an F7, but slide all notes one half-step sharp (one fret sharp), toward the bridge.

Not too complicated.

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Just Checking your Master Exercise ...

Just to make sure we've communicated OK, here is the first line from the Master Exercise part one all spelled out for Bass-Bottom Megatar.

First you arpeggiate (play note by note from bottom to the top and then back down again), the CM7 chord (which is the I-chord in key of C) and you do this several times.

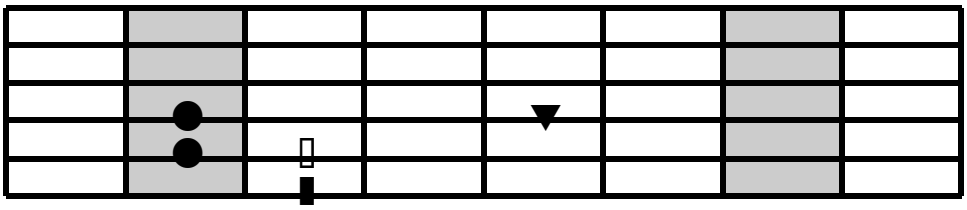
Next you arpeggiate the FM7 chord (which is the IV-chord in the key of C) several times.

Then you arpeggiate the CM7 chord again several times.

Finally you arpeggiate the G7 chord (which is the V-chord in the key of C) several times.

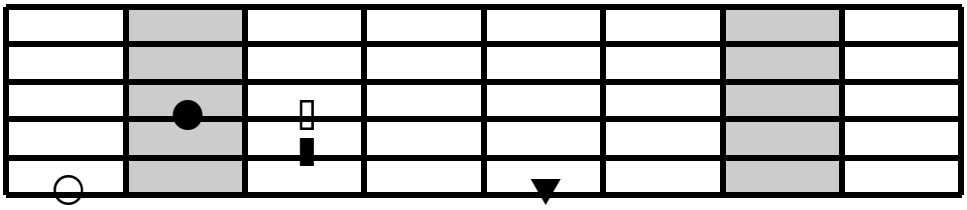
How many times each chord? If you could do once per chord with no errors, that would be good practice. But the presence of errors would say try them twice each. Also there the presence of errors would say try them four times each. And so on.

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7



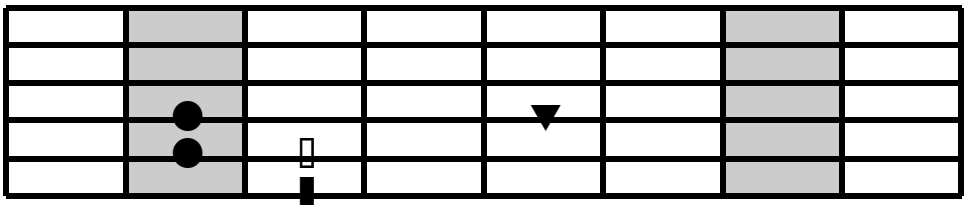
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand FM7



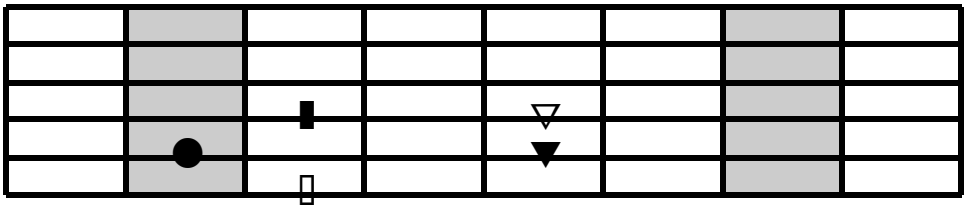
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand G7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

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4 = X
Root = Hollow

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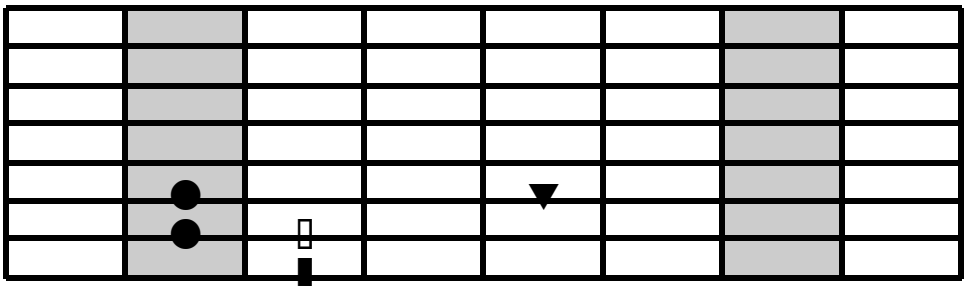
Master Exercise on 8-String Bass

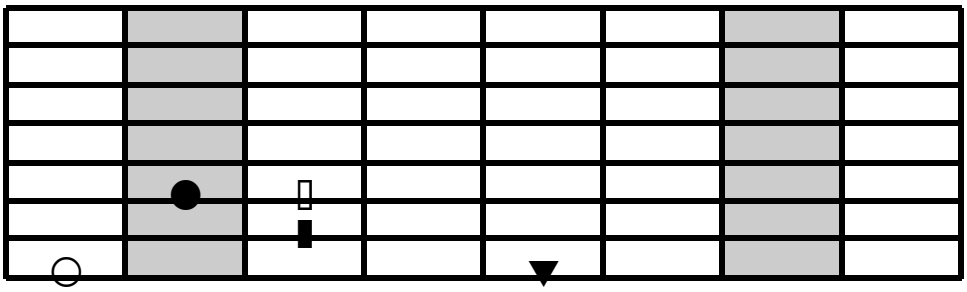
Here is the same reality check done for players of 8-String Bass, and the instructions are exactly the same as given on the previous page for arpeggiating the chords in sequence ...

8-String Bass — Left-Hand CM7



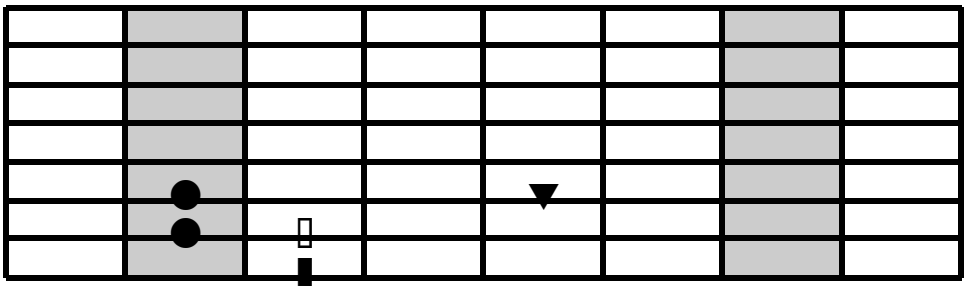
Fret 7 Fret 12

8-String Bass — Left-Hand FM7



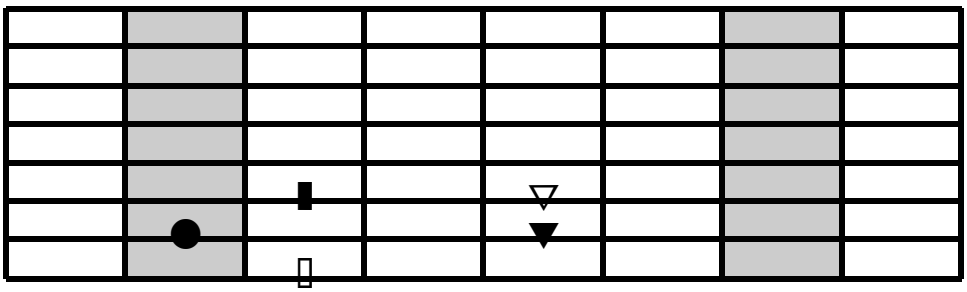
Fret 7 Fret 12

8-String Bass — Left-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 7 Fret 12

8-String Bass — Left-Hand G7



Fret 7 Fret 12

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4 = X
Root = Hollow

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Master Exercise on Fifths-Bottom Instrument ...

Here is the same reality check done for players of Fifths-Bottom Instruments. Do exercise as:

First you arpeggiate (play note by note from bottom to the top and then back down again), the CM7 chord (which is the I-chord in key of C) and you do this several times.

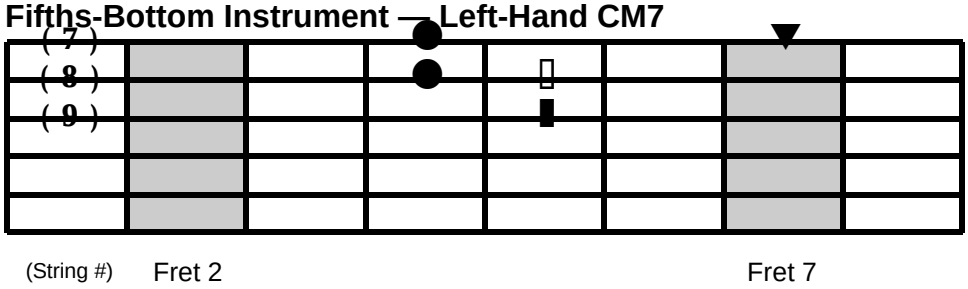
Next you arpeggiate the FM7 chord (which is the IV-chord in the key of C) several times.

Then you arpeggiate the CM7 chord again several times.

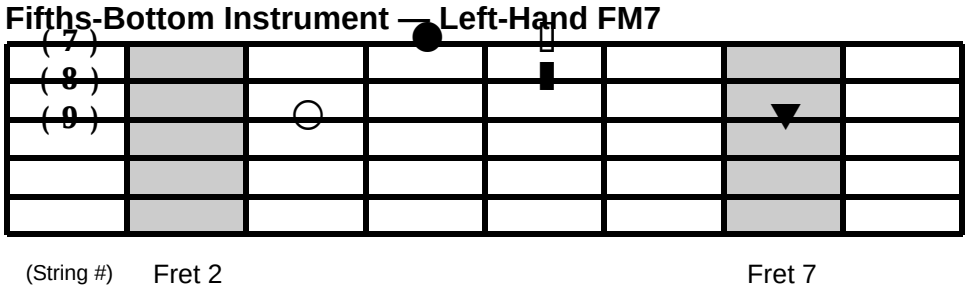
Finally you arpeggiate the G7 chord (which is the V-chord in the key of C) several times.

How many times each chord? If you could do once per chord with no errors, that would be good practice. But the presence of errors would say try them twice each. Also there the presence of errors would say try them four times each. And so on.

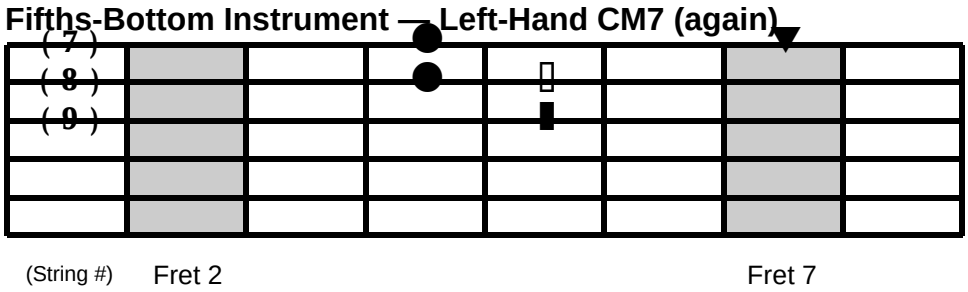
Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Left-Hand CM7



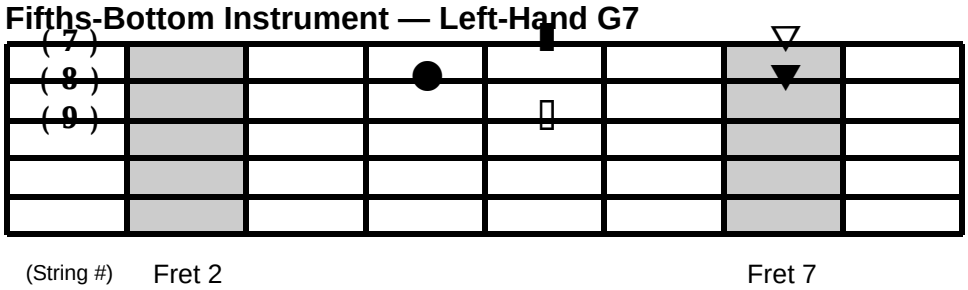
Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Left-Hand FM7



Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Left-Hand CM7 (again)



Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Left-Hand G7



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

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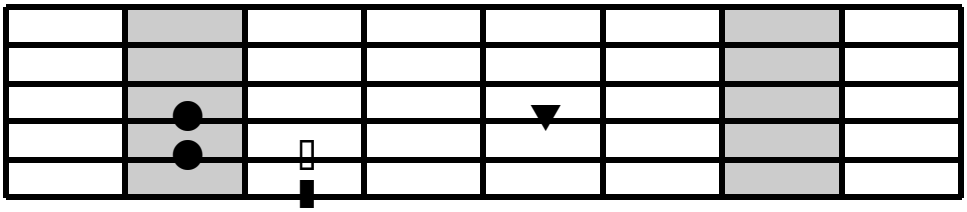
Let's Check the Right Hand, too!

Just to make sure we're on the same page before moving forward, here is the first line from the Master Exercise part one all spelled out for Bass-Bottom Megatar on the right-hand part.

As you learn the Master Exercise, you're going to learn each of the seven chord-shapes. If you're like us, you'll try playing them left-hand, then right-hand, then both hands together.

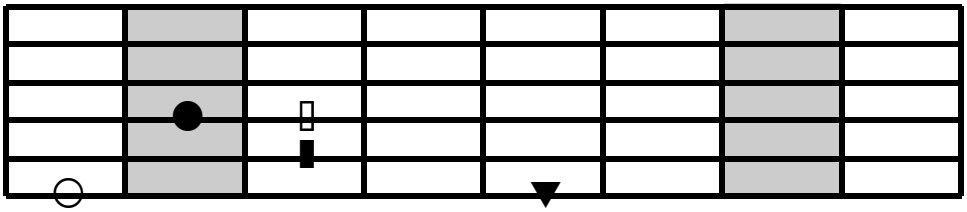
The nice thing about the Master Exercise is that it provides musically-useful training. Part One trains your hands through a common chord sequence which we call the 'Folk Cycle' (although it occurs in all types of music).

Bass-bottom Megatar — Right-Hand CM7



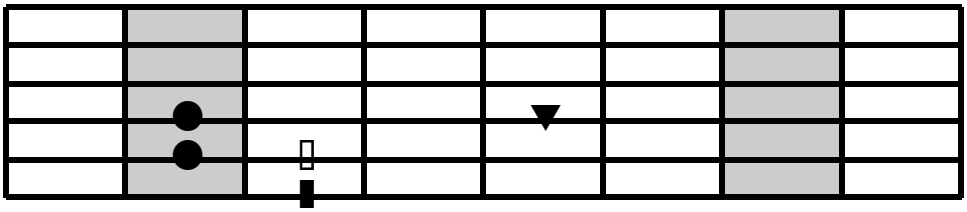
Fret 17 Fret 22

Bass-bottom Megatar — Right-Hand FM7



Fret 17 Fret 22

Bass-bottom Megatar — Right-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 17 Fret 22

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
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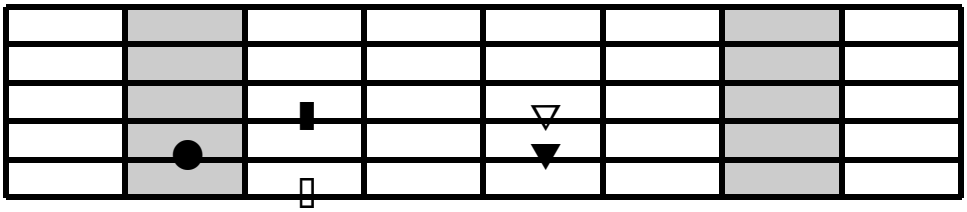
Root = Hollow

Bass-bottom Megatar — Right-Hand G7



Fret 17 Fret 22

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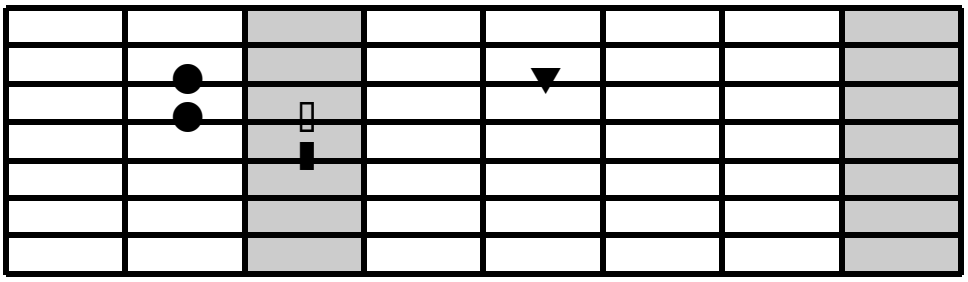
Right Hand on 8-String Bass

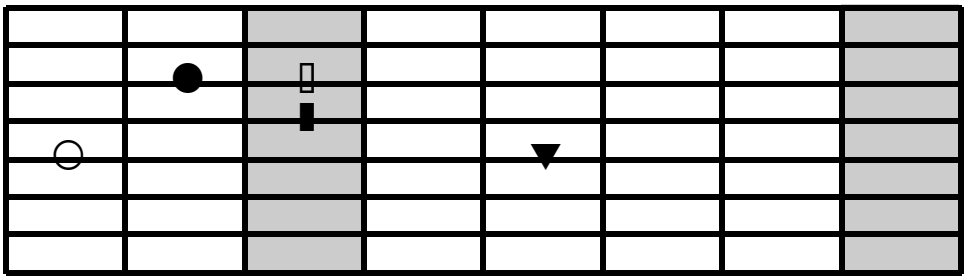
Here is the same reality check done for players of 8-String Bass, and the instructions are exactly the same as given on the previous page for arpeggiating the chords in sequence ...

8-String Bass — Right-Hand CM7



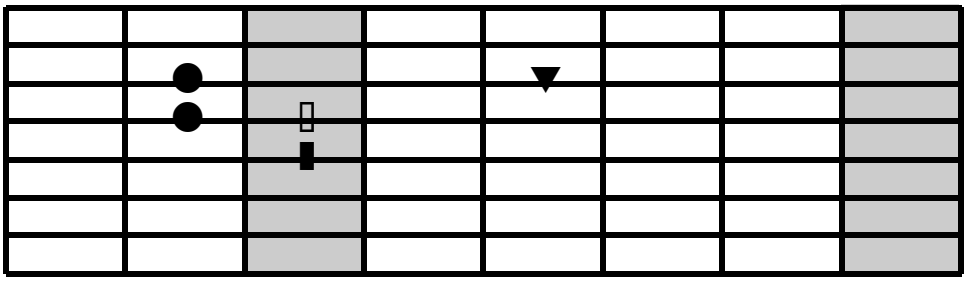
Fret 17 Fret 22

8-String Bass — Right-Hand FM7



Fret 17 Fret 22

8-String Bass — Right-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 17 Fret 22

Traktor's Finger Symbols

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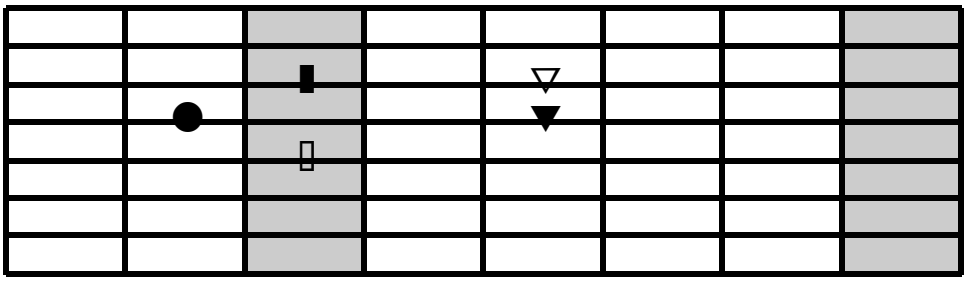
8-String Bass — Right-Hand G7



Fret 17 Fret 22

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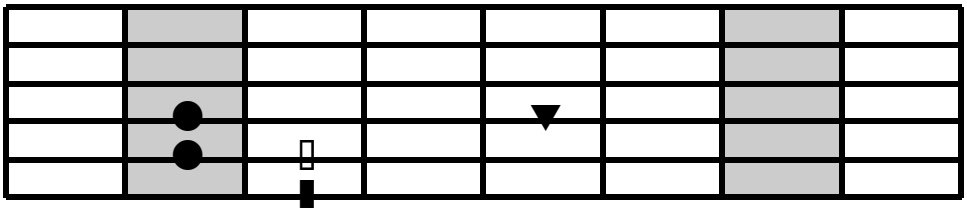
Right Hand on Fifths-Bottom Instrument ...

Here is the same reality check done for players of Fifths-Bottom Instruments.

As you learn the Master Exercise, you're going to learn each of the seven chord-shapes. If you're like us, you'll try playing them left-hand, then right-hand, then both hands together.

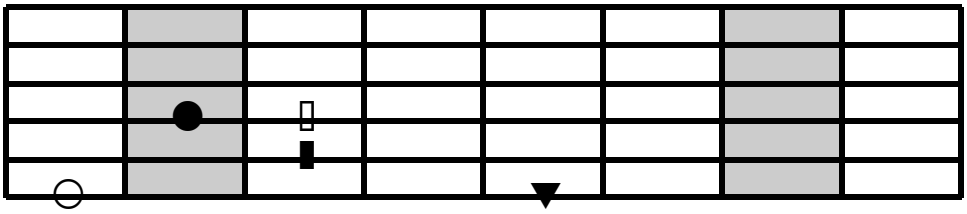
The nice thing about the Master Exercise is that it provides musically-useful training. Part One trains your hands through a common chord sequence which we call the 'Folk Cycle' (although it occurs in all types of music).

Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand CM7



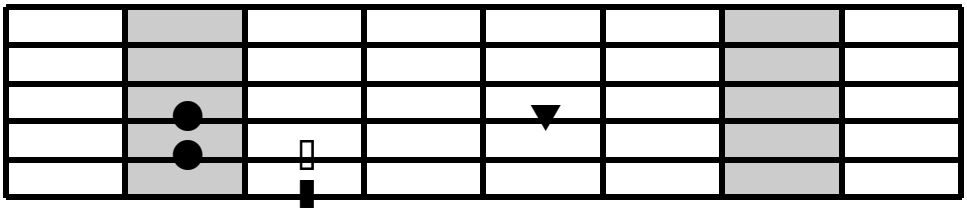
Fret 17 Fret 22

Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand FM7



Fret 17 Fret 22

Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 17 Fret 22

Traktor's Finger Symbols

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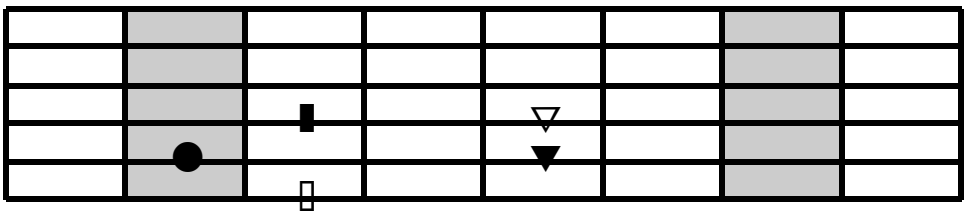
Fifths-Bottom Instrument — Right-Hand G7



Fret 17 Fret 22

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Daily Warm-Up

The Six Noble Rhythms

Our recommendation is to use the Master Exercise as your Daily Warm-Up. As you will quickly see, the Master Exercise is a simple set of movements which accustom your fingers to being in the right place at the right time.

As you will also see, the Master Exercise leads directly to many ways of playing what we call 'Rhythm Bass' (basslines plus rhythmic chords), and it leads easily to walking bass, bass hooks, two-handed tumbling arpeggios, and bass or melody solos and more.

So a daily practice session might consist of:

- Master Exercise Warm-Up
- Playing Some Songs
- Other Study: (sight-reading, theory, ear-training, composition, etc.)

Using the Master Exercise as your Daily Warm-Up is easy. Initially, we recommend six rhythmic ways to play it. These variations both groove your fingers into the chord shape with your hands going together, and these variations also start the process of letting your two hands select out different parts so they sound as if they're playing independently.

These six hand rhythms can be used just as they are to play songs, and after they are comfortable to your fingers, you will find it natural to add rhythmic variation, which very quickly give you a wealth of ways to play.

What we call the Six Noble Rhythms are listed in compact fashion in this table —

The Six Noble Rhythms	
LH Arp (Left-Hand Arpeggiate)	**RH Arp (Right-Hand Arpeggiate)**
LH Arp	**RH Roots**
LH Roots	**RH Roots**
LH Roots	**RH Arp**
LH Roots	**RH GT-Chords (Guide-Tones)**
LH Arp	**RH GT-Chords (Guide-Tones)**

What We Do Now, Kemo-Sabe?

Here's what you do —

- Select a line from the 'Folk Cycle' for today's practice. This gives you four chords.
- The first rhythm is LH Arp / RH Arp, which means you play the first chord's chord-tones up and down one note per beat, perhaps up and down on this chord several times. Then the same on the second chord, the same on the third chord, same on the fourth chord, then repeat the four chords the same way. Go round several times till your hands feel comfortable, and your ears say the rhythm is solid and the notes sound clear. This is the most basic and most useful of all the exercises.
- The second rhythm is LH Arp / RH Roots, and this means you do your same chord-tones up and down with your left hand, but with your right hand, play only the chord's root. Play it on the beat, play it off the beat, play it rhythmically wherever you like, but keep it simple. If errors multiply, make it simpler.
- The third rhythm is LH Roots / RH Roots, and this means you play the progression by playing only the chords' roots in each hand. Important Note: You still play the root with the finger you were using on that note when you were arpeggiating it. Play the roots in any rhythmic manner that pleases you . If errors multiply, simplify. This rhythm may take less time to get it right than other rhythms.
- The fourth rhythm is LH Roots / RH Arp, so your right hand goes back to arpeggiating the chord-tones on the beat up and down, while your left hand plays only the roots. Left hand should probably initially only play on the beat.
- For the fifth and sixth rhythm, we must learn how to play 'Guide-Tone' Chords, and that is next ...

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The Duality of Guide Tones

In Jim Grantham's excellent 'JazzMaster Workout' you will find a great description of 'Guide Tones.' The Guide Tones in a chord are just two notes. The notes are the 'third' and the 'seventh' of the chord.

If you want to play harmony in the simplest possible fashion, you play these two notes. They are *easy*, because they are tones your fingers are already playing. They are *safe*, because if the chord has modifications such as a flat five or an added ninth they will still fit and sound harmonious.

Finding Guide Tones is Easy

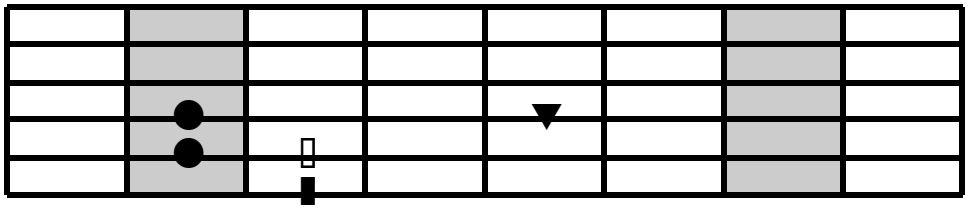
For each chord, you already know how to find the root because its finger-symbol is hollow.

In these major-seventh and seventh chords you are playing the root, third, fifth, and seventh, and therefore it's easy to find the guide tones because

- The *third* has got to be *the next chord-tone <u>up</u> from the root*, and
- The *seventh* has got to be *the next chord-tone <u>below</u> the root.*

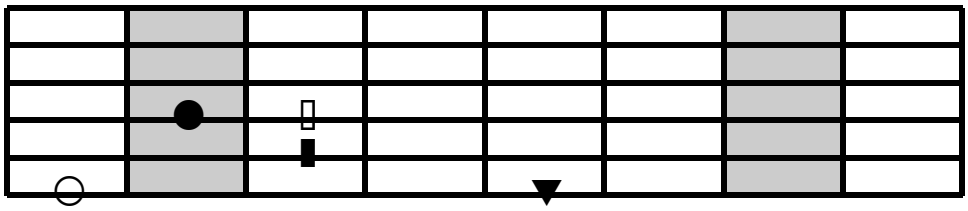
Try picking out the guide tones on the chords below. Lightly pencil-circle them on the graph.

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7



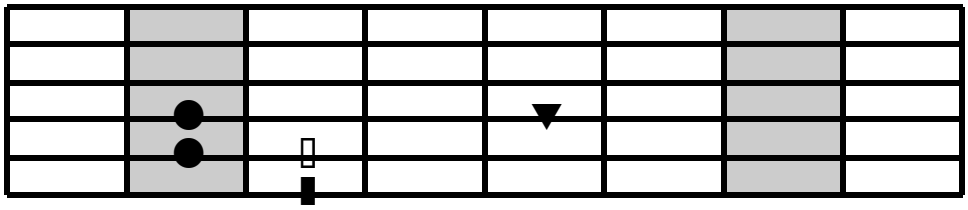
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand FM7



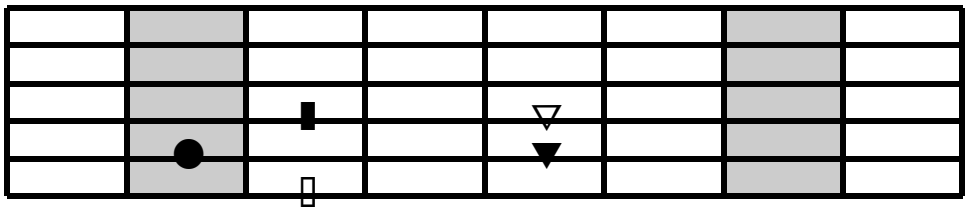
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand G7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

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Guide Tones Exposed!

We hope you did the exercise of finding the Guide Tones (the third above the root, and the seventh below the root) on the previous page.

And we hope you got them correctly.

Before we go on, let's make sure.

For comparison, we asked our panel of experts to circle the Guide Tones in the chords below. You got them correct? Then you're an expert, too!

But if you got any wrong, please figure out why and see why these circles show the third & seventh before you go on.

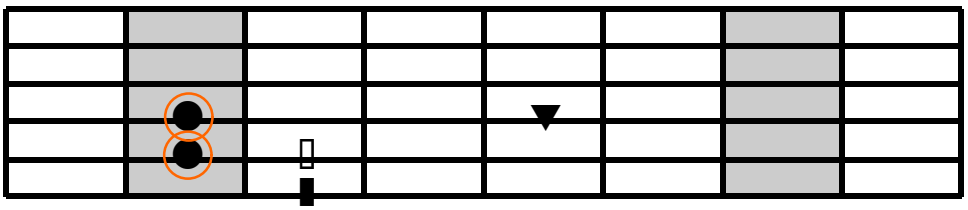
Noble Rhythms Numbers Five and Six

Now you can play the complete Warm-Up —

- The fifth rhythm is LH Roots / RH GT Chords, which means your left hand just plays roots on the beat, and your right hand plays the third and seventh together in any simple rhythmic fashion.
- The sixth rhythm is LH Arp / RH GT Chords, which means your left hand plays the chord up and down on the beat, and your right hand plays the third and seventh together in any simple rhythmic fashion you desire.

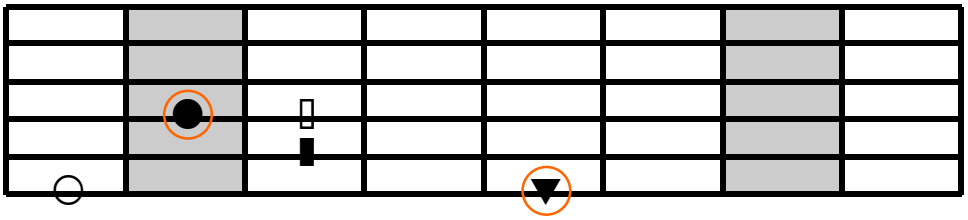
Yow! You got rhythm!

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7



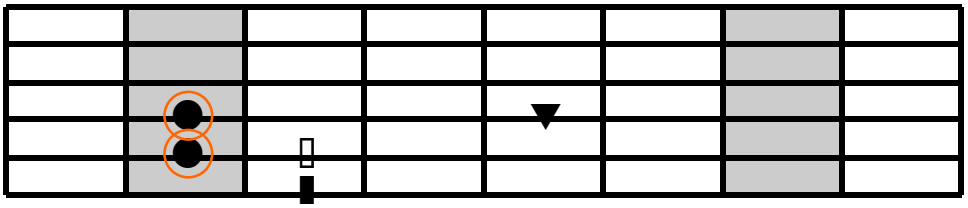
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand FM7



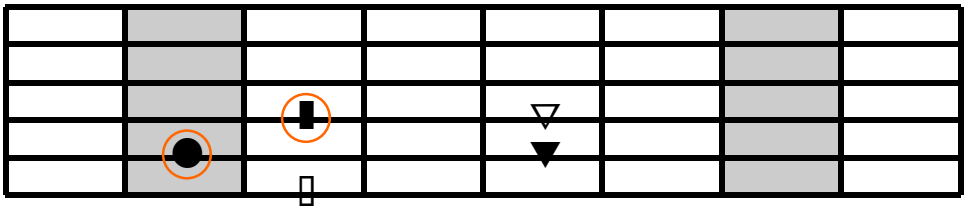
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7 (again)



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand G7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
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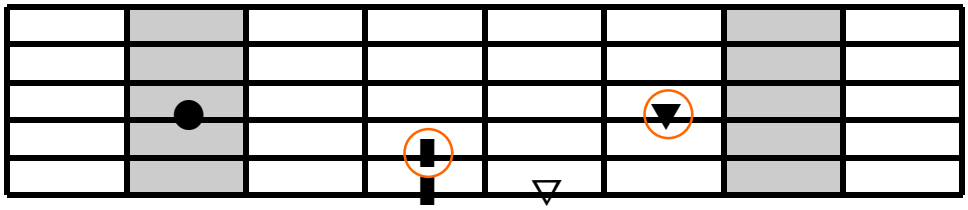
Guide Tones for Everybody!

Below are the complete set of Seven Magic Chords, that is, the Major-Seven Chords from A to G, and the Guide Tones are indicated.

Please familiarize yourself with the Guide Tones, and try playing all Six Noble Rhythms through the Folk Cycle chord progressions as your Daily Warm-Up.

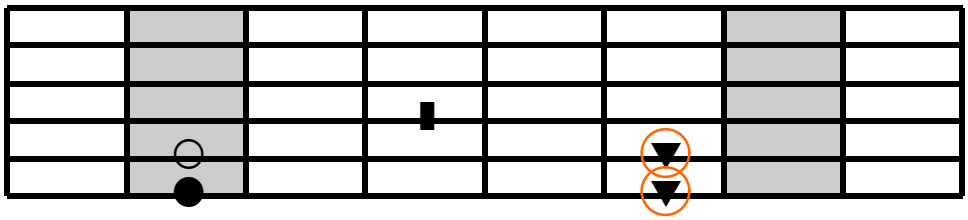
Please be sure you can do this without confusion before going on, because the next section is certain to make you blue ...

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand AM7



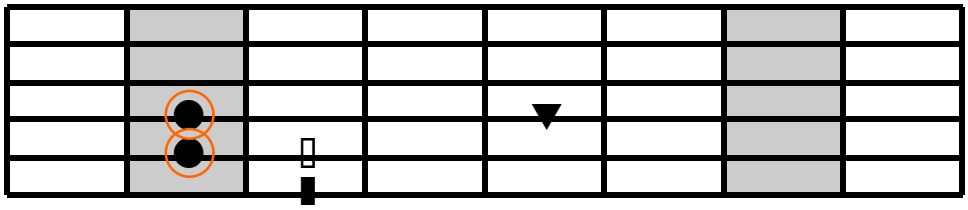
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand BM7



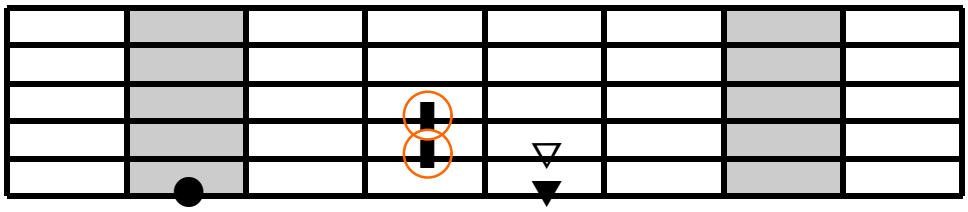
Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand CM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand DM7



Fret 7 Fret 12

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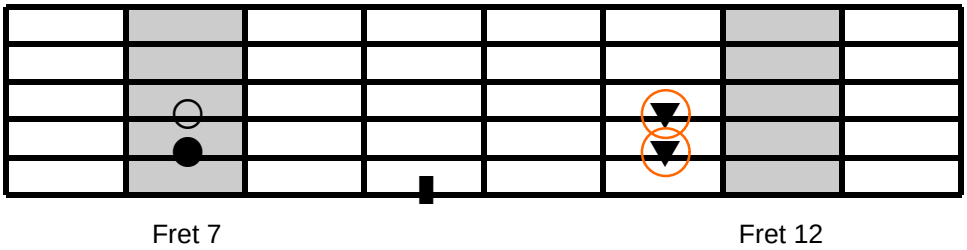
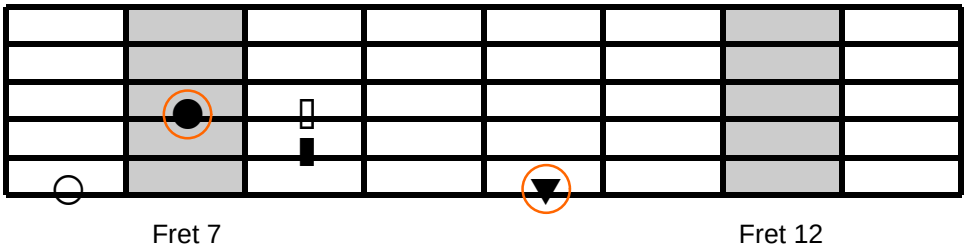
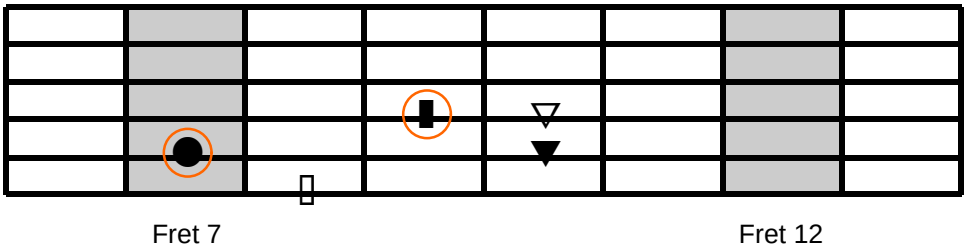
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand EM7



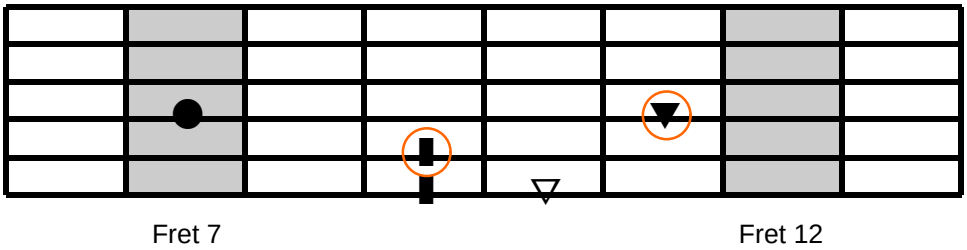
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand FM7



Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand GM7



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand AM7 (again)



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Fingering?

The Major-Seventh chords are especially kind in that strict fingering of the Guide Tones works out just fine. On a chord like FM7 you are using exactly the fingers on the third and seventh tones as you'd use when arpeggiating the chord.

On a chord like CM7 where the guide tones are two notes at the same fret on adjacent strings, you can still play both with the first finger as indicated — that is you just tap your first finger so it strikes both strings.

Now it would be possible to use two fingers to fret the Guide Tones, and there would be some value in such a practice, because it would make possible playing the two guide tones either simultaneously or at different times.

Although that would be a useful thing, for now just play them in the simplest manner: simultaneously, using one finger to strike both strings.

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Sour Seventh-Chord Guide Tones

Below are the complete set of Dominant Seven or simply Seven Chords from A to G.

Notice that when the third and seventh fall on adjacent strings, they always form a diagonal.

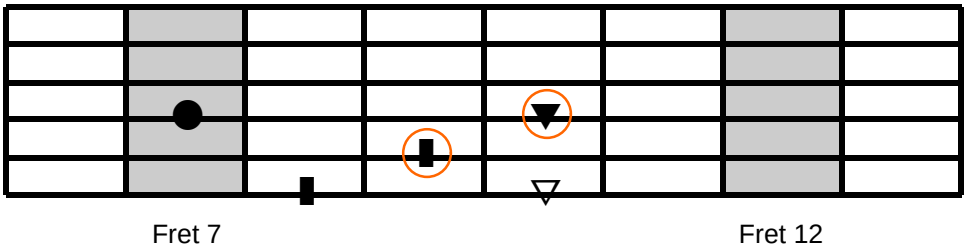
When two notes fall on the *same* fret on adjacent strings, then their vibrating harmonics tend to line up (as you can see using an oscilloscope) and they tend to sound coherent. Two such notes are 'a fourth' apart.

But when two fall on a diagonal as do the thirds and sevenths shown on most of these chords, their harmonics tend to clash, and this is what gives your ear the typical 'sour' sound of the seventh chord. Such notes are 'a flat fifth' apart.

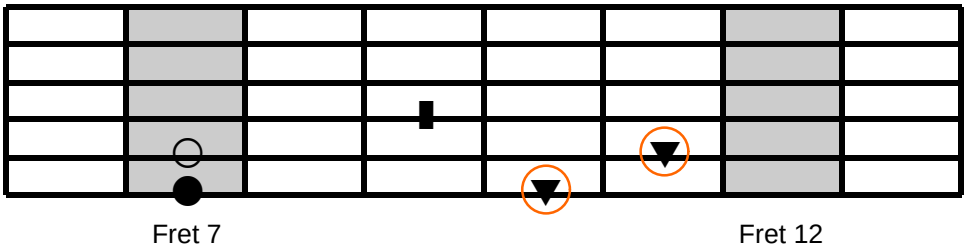
Note that this 'diagonal' comment does not apply to diagonals slanting in the other direction such as in the C7 chord the C-note and the E-note. These notes are 'a major third' apart, and their harmonics tend to line up in a way that's pleasing to our ear (but different from the 'fourth apart' sound).

How might you finger these Guide Tones?

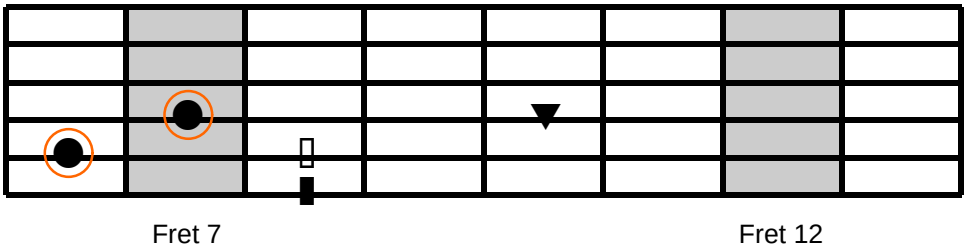
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand A7



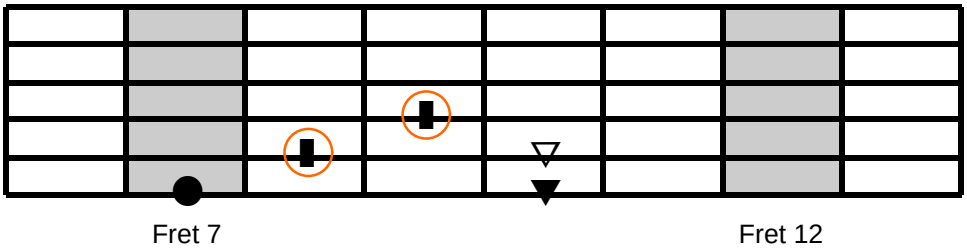
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand B7



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand C7



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand D7



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X

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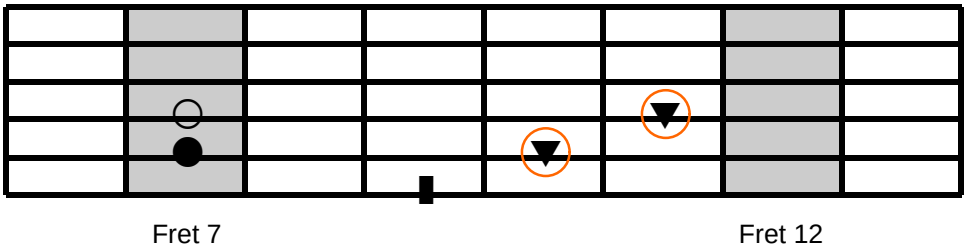
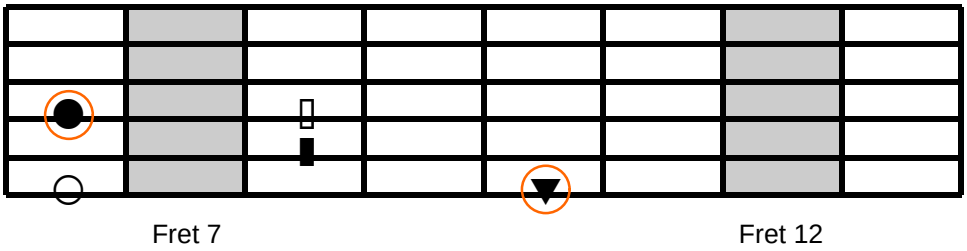
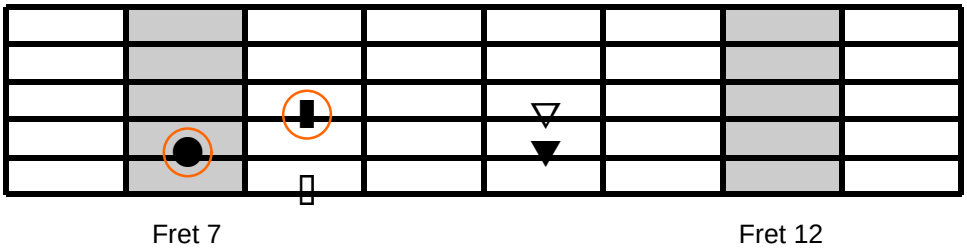
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand E7



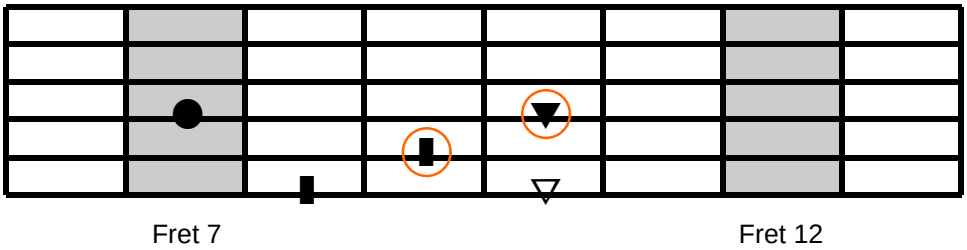
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand F7



Bass-bottom Megatar — Left-Hand G7



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand A7 (again)



Traktor's Finger Symbols

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Fingering the Seventh Chords

Fingering is not so obvious, is it?

But there is a reasonable and orderly way to go about it, and we'll tell you right now something that almost works perfectly — Think of arpeggiating the chord and finger the first third-or-seventh you encounter just as in the arpeggiation. It will then be obvious which finger to use for the second Guide Tone.

However, on the B7 and E7 this big plan fails because the first Guide Tone you encounter occupies your third finger. Although you could then use your 'spare third finger,' that is, your little finger, to play the other guide tone, we suggest that in this case use your second and third fingers, and there's only one way they'll easily play the two Guide Tones. It's obvious. It's easy. And it works OK, so that's what we'll do.

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‘Zone’ Fingering

When using the approach of playing three fingers on each of the typical three notes that occur on each string, clearly we are *not* allocating one finger per fret, because the nine holy notes spread out over five frets, and many of you don’t have that many fingers.

Further, sometimes other ‘leading-tone’ notes occur just above or just below the nine-note pattern, which makes ‘one-finger-per-fret’ quite unworkable for our three-fingered approach.

So what we’re doing, in general, is using each of your three fingers to play in a ‘zone’ of two frets. This tends to work out fairly well.

Below we’ve shown an F7 chord, We used F7 just because it spreads out. We could have used E7 or B7 just as easily, as they spread out also.

We’ve indicated on three F7 chords the three zones which are — in general — played by each of your fingers. If you are following the chord shapes, you really don’t have to think much about this, because the Bookmark System’s chord diagrams already contain this zone fingering.

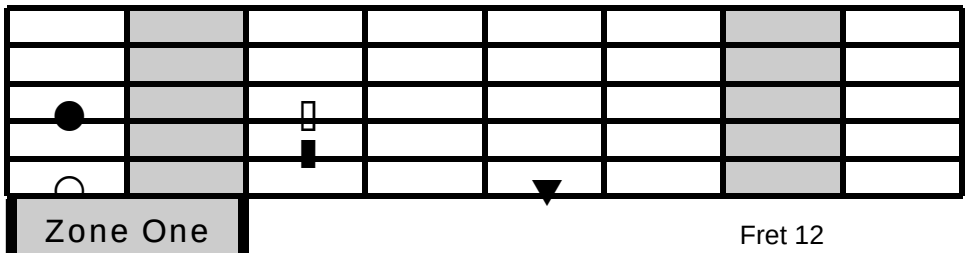
Still, just to give you clarity about what’s going on — and to help you solve problems with various altered chord-forms down the road — here’s the big system revealed.

These zones are not highly strict. For example, you’ll see that zones two & three overlap because sometimes you play that fret with finger two and sometimes with finger three, as you’ll see when examining chord diagrams.

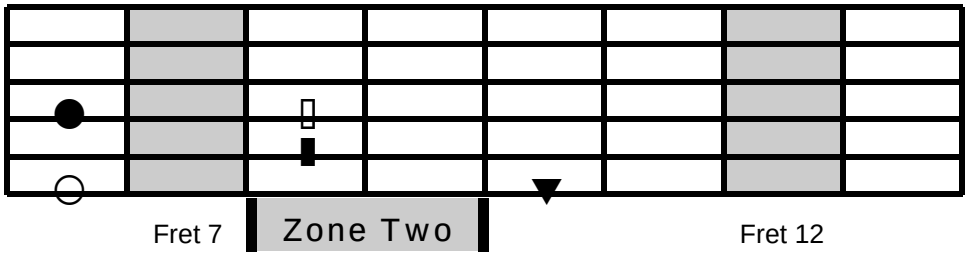
Also, when you wish to play a Bb7, the simplest way to do it is to play a B7 shape and drop it one fret to make it Bb7. It’s just the simplest way to do it. If your mind sees your three fingers in the three ’zones,’ your mind will find as obvious the idea of sliding a chord down to make it flat or sliding it up to make it sharp. No weird re-fingering required!

Now if anybody asks you what’s going on, you can just tell them — you’re in the zone.

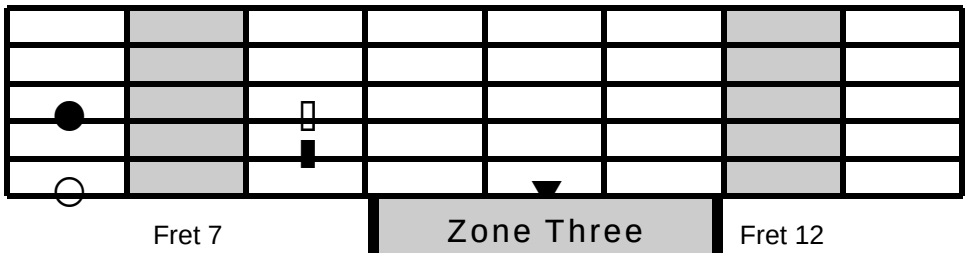
Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand F7



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand F7



Bass-Bottom Megatar — Left-Hand F7



Traktor’s Finger Symbols

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The Four-Bar Blues

And now we got the blues, most assuredly.

As most of you know, the blues are usually played in a 12-measure pattern, generally referred to as 'Twelve bar blues'.

But we're going to start with something a little simpler — the Four Bar Blues, which you see outlined in the 'Blues Cycle'. Here we have a simplified blues form you can use in your Warm-Up as a next step from the 'Folk Cycle,' or for you fast learners you can do the Blues Cycle in your Warm-Up *in addition* to doing the Folk Cycle.

If the blues chords are new to you, you'll be delighted to see that it consists only of Dominant-Seven chords (also called just 'Seventh Chords), and that the sequence of chords is identical to the Folk Cycle. That is, you play the I-chord, the IV-chord, the I-chord again, and the V-chord. Except this time there are no Major Seven chords, just plain old Seventh chords, and it has a completely different sound.

You can learn the 'Twelve Bar' version later, but for now, select one of the chord progressions on one of the lines (usually the same key you practiced in the Folk Cycle), and run the six Noble Rhythms through the Blues Cycle.

You'll have the blues, and you'll like it!

The Blues Cycle

Day of the Month	I Chord (Root)	IV Chord	I Chord (Root)	V Chord
	C7	F7	C7	G7
	Bb7	Eb7	Bb7	F7
	Ab7	Db7	Ab7	Eb7
	Gb7	Cb7	Gb7	Db7
	E7	A7	E7	B7
	D7	G7	D7	A7
	____	____	____	____
	G7	C7	G7	D7
	F7	Bb7	F7	C7
	Eb7	Ab7	Eb7	Bb7
	Db7	Gb7	Db7	Ab7
	B7	E7	B7	F#7
	A7	D7	A7	E7

The 'Day of the Month' Column

Once you can play this exercise, you may want to set up a schedule for daily warm up. Use this column for marking your schedule, to keep track.

Gb or F#?

If you wanted to, instead of playing the Gb blues, you could play the F# blues. It would of course be F#7, B7, F#7, and C#7.

You Went to Twelve Bars?

We're sure you all know this, but for that one guy who doesn't, the 'Twelve Bar Blues' goes like this —

I7, I7, I7, I7 (Or can be played I7, IV7, I7, I7)
IV7, IV7, I7, I7
V7, IV7, I7, V7 (and then repeat, all the while complaining about your woman and money)

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The Six Noble Rhythms & Blues

Let's say you've accepted our recommendation to use the Master Exercise as your Daily Warm-Up. We'd like to repeat that the Master Exercise is a set of movements which accustom your fingers to being in the right place at the right time, and it also leads directly to playing 'Rhythm Bass' (bass notes plus rhythmic chords), as well as playing melodies, bass solos (what!), and more.

So assuming that you've got the Folk Cycle down pretty well, then your new daily practice session might consist of:

- Master Exercise Warm-Up using the Folk Cycle, then
- Master Exercise Warm-up using the Blues Cycle
- Playing Some Songs
- Other Study: (sight-reading, theory, ear-training, composition, etc.)

What if you're doing well, but pretty much use up your allotted practice time just going through the Folk Cycle? Well, you could do some of the Six Noble Rhythms in the Folk Cycle, then switch to the Blues Cycle and do the others.

The Six Noble Rhythms are listed again here, for your convenience —

The Six Noble Rhythms	
LH Arp (Left-Hand Arpeggiate)	**RH Arp (Right-Hand Arpeggiate)**
LH Arp	**RH Roots**
LH Roots	**RH Roots**
LH Roots	**RH Arp**
LH Roots	**RH GT-Chords (Guide-Tones)**
LH Arp	**RH GT-Chords (Guide-Tones)**

Master Exercise using the 6 Rhythms

- Select a line from the 'Folk Cycle' for today's practice. This gives you four chords.
- The first rhythm is LH Arp / RH Arp, which means you play the first chord's chord-tones up and down one note per beat, perhaps up and down on this chord several times. Then the same on the second chord, the same on the third chord, same on the fourth chord, then repeat the four chords the same way. Go round several times till your hands feel comfortable, and your ears say the rhythm is solid and the notes sound clear. This is the most basic and most useful of all the exercises.
- The second rhythm is LH Arp / RH Roots, and this means you do your same chord-tones up and down with your left hand, but with your right hand, play only the chord's root. Play it on the beat, play it off the beat, play it rhythmically wherever you like, but keep it simple. If errors multiply, make it simpler.
- The third rhythm is LH Roots / RH Roots, and this means you play the progression by playing only the chords' roots in each hand. Important Note: You still play the root with the finger you were using on that note when you were arpeggiating it. Play the roots in any rhythmic manner that pleases you . If errors multiply, simplify. This rhythm may take less time to get it right than other rhythms.
- The fourth rhythm is LH Roots / RH Arp, so your right hand goes back to arpeggiating the chord-tones on the beat up and down, while your left hand plays only the roots. Left hand should probably initially only play on the beat.
- The fifth rhythm is LH Roots / RH Guide-Tone Chords, so your right hand plays the simultaneous third and seventh in rhythmic fashion, while your left hand plays only roots. Please note — you can play entire songs in this simple fashion and be very musical, using rhythm number five.
- The sixth rhythm is LH Arp / RH Guide-Tone Chords, so your right hand plays the chord's third and seventh (the 'Guide Tones) by striking them at the same time in a simple rhythmic fashion, while your left hand arpeggiates the chord as usual.
- All done? Now do the same six with the Blues Cycle. To enhance your learning and clarity, stay in the same key as you played during the Folk Cycle.

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Songs to Play

How to Play Songs

Now we come to some songs, so the question arises: How shall we play these songs?

We suggest you give a try with nothing more than Noble Rhythm Number Five.

Noble Rhythm Number Five stated in our concise manner says 'LH root / RH GT-chords.' And this just means to play the chord's root with your left hand, while your right hand plays the chord's third and seventh (the 'Guide Tones') simultaneously in a soft and rhythmic manner.

Go slow, and pay attention the basics of posture and how you're holding your body. After initially placing your hands (as needed), please play by touch.

- Use your mind's vision to picture the shapes upon the fretboard
- Use your fingertips' touch to play the notes by feeling for the frets, and
- Use your ears to hear how well you are succeeding.

If errors multiply, then slow down, play each chord more times through before changing to the next, and play simpler rhythms.

Remember, speed or rapid rhythms are not important. Being dead on the rhythm and getting clear tones is what's important. Play them as slow as molasses if you need to. Just make them rock in the pocket at the low tempo.

If you can rock steady, someday you'll boogie all night long with the best of them.

What about minor chords?

We're going to have to waffle just a little here, because we do not intend to cover minor chords much at all in this book, and that's because we have some big plans for minor chords in Book Number Two.

But since songs contain minor chords, we'll tell you how to get the job done by cheating!

What is a minor chord?

You will recall that we modified the Major Seventh chord to become the Dominant Seventh chord just by dropping its 'seventh' by one half step.

Well, you create a 'minor seven' chord by dropping that Major Seventh's seventh by one half step and by also dropping that Major Seventh's third by one half a step.

Presto! You've got a 'minor seventh' chord.

Now you are particularly fortunate in this case, because by great grand coincidence you have just learned the location of all the sevenths and thirds!

So How do you Play a minor chord?

Well, if you are a diligent estudiante, then you will immediately grab your pencil. You will go to the Dominant Seventh chords (because they've already got the seventh dropped), and you will find the third and you'll lower it one half step. And then you will figure out how to finger it.

On the other hand, if you're *really* thinking, you will realize that those guide tone chords for the Major Seventh chords already have the third and seventh selected — so why not just slide them both one fret lower?

And in fact, this will work!

Just play the root, and play the identical guide tones from the Major Seven chord — one fret lower.

Presto! Instant 'minor seven' chords.

Now, because we are painfully honest guys, we feel compelled to tell you that there is a third way to learn about the minor seven chords —

(Peek in the Appendix.)

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Song Playing Tips

Song Playing Tips

This book contains either six or twelve printed songs. In the free, downloadable version of the book, the first six songs are not included, because their copyrights are owned by other folks, and we have no license to give them away for free. (We purchased rights to give the second six songs away for free so they are included.) In the printed and bound copy of this book which you bought or obtained along with a Mobius instrument, all twelve songs appear.

Analyzing a Song

- Time Signature — Using the first song 'Fly Me to the Moon' as an example, this song is written in 4/4, which means that you count 1-2-3-4 for each measure, and each of these four beats will be represented by a quarter-note. (If you have the downloaded version and 'Fly Me' is not included, take a look at 'Flammy Tammy Moo' which has chords and structure similar to 'Fly Me.'
- Key Signature — 'Fly Me' (or 'Flammy') shows no sharps nor flats printed on the left of the first line, and therefore the song will be in the key of C.
- Counting the Measures — In our example song, you'll see eight measures and then the 'First Ending' which has another eight measures. The First Ending ends in a Repeat Sign, which takes you back to the top, or the head. Now you play the same eight measures but now you take the Second Ending, which contains twelve measures, so you know it's going to have a little extra thing in there.
- Visually chart the path of the song — Just using your eyes, flow over the main part into the first ending, and then zip back to the beginning and then follow along till you jump down to the second ending, to the end. Going over the flow before you play helps you not be searching while you are trying to play!

If you'll be playing the melody —

- Accidentals — As you look over the example song, you see there are only two notes in the entire song that have a sharp sign, meaning that instead of playing G-natural and C-Natural you'll play G-Sharp and C-Sharp for those two notes. Everywhere else the G and the C are G-Natural and C-Natural. Notice that these accidentals sometimes point out places where the chord might be something slightly unusual, so be sure to look at the chords in that same place.
- Rhythm of notes and tricky bits — Look over the rhythm patterns, and if any look strange, count them out to make the rhythm familiar. Especially watch for areas where there are many, many notes in a small area. Luckily in our example song, this doesn't happen.

If you'll be playing chords —

- Read through the chords, and if it helps you, picture how you play that chord.
- Simplify chords whenever necessary. In our example song, in the 7th measure, there is a E7b9 chord. If you know how to play an E7b9, that's fine, but if you don't? Then just play an E7 and you'll discover it sounds just fine. Often, unusual chords echo some note happening in the melody line, and since that note is being played by the melody, the chord gets along just fine without it.

If you can, try playing the song in different ways:

- Go through the song looking at the chords, and just play the root with both hands.
- Go through the song arpeggiating the chords with both hands.
- Try playing just the root in the right hand while your left hands arpeggiates the chord.
- Now the other way, root in the left hand while your right hand arpeggiates.
- If you can play the melody, try playing it with your right hand while your left hand plays the roots.
- And then you go on from there …

Analyze Before Playing

Taking time to analyze what's before you before you leap in, makes it much easier to play the piece. If you get in the habit of analyzing first, you'll learn playing more easily and quickly.

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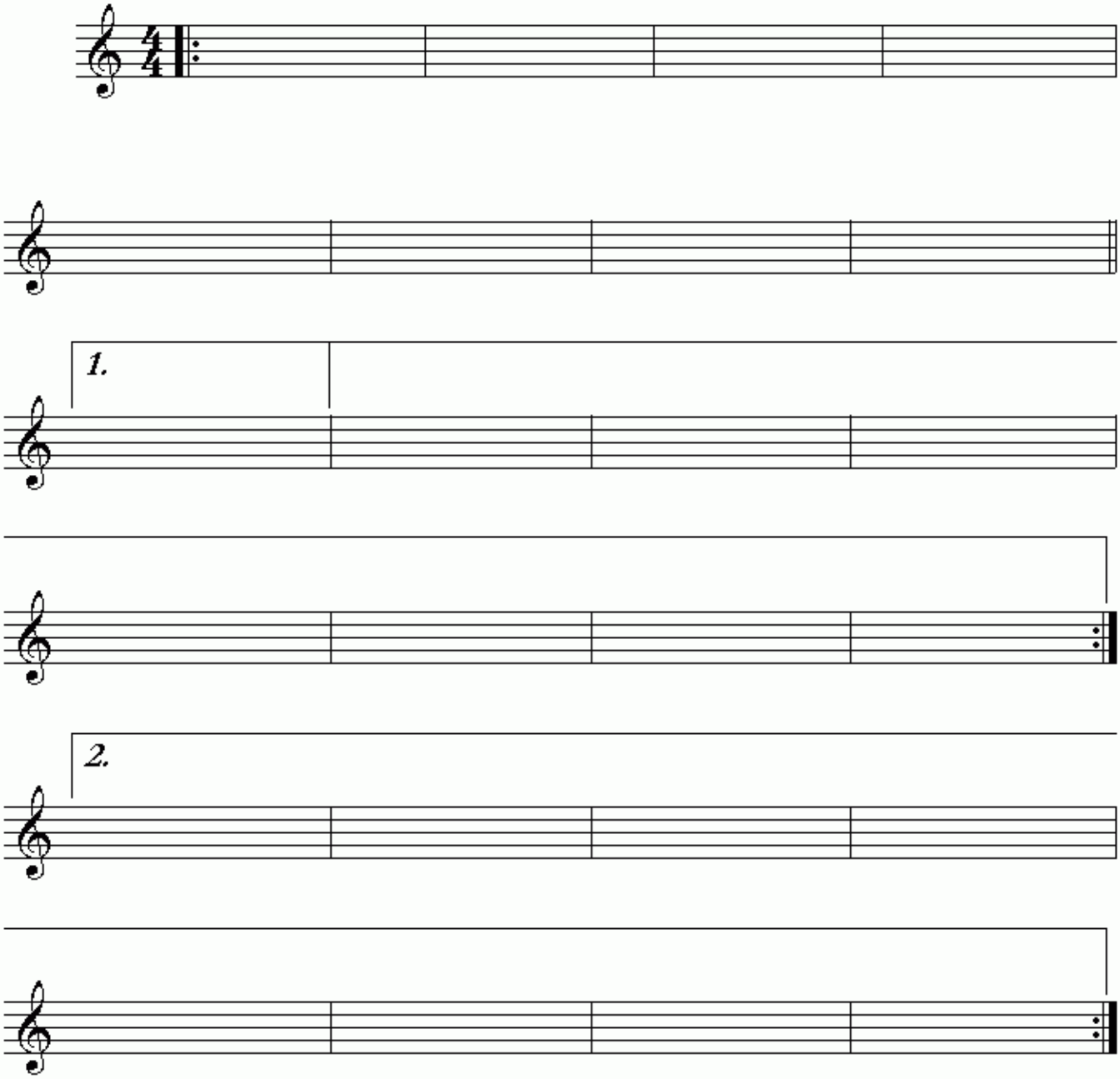
Easy Touch-Style Bassics

Fly Me to the Moon

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Loungio Lizardo Pragmante

Words and Music by Bart Howard



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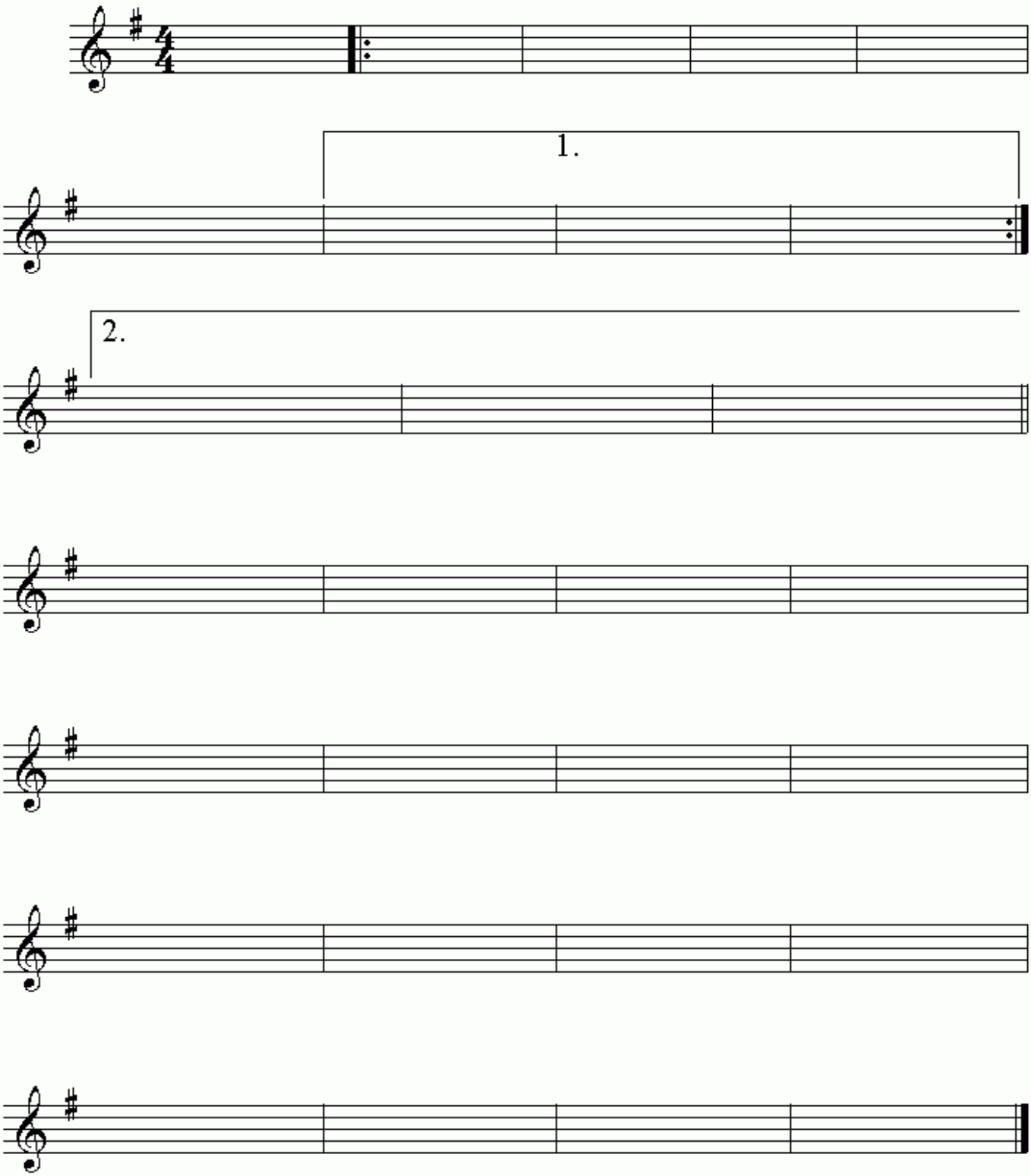
Autumn Leaves

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Sadly, like raining and whimpering

English lyric by Johnny Mercer, French lyric by Jacques Prevert
Music by Joseph Kosma (c) 1947, 1950 (renewed) Enoch et Cie



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Only Trust Your Heart

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Slow and Dreamy Bossa, Melody Robato

by Sammy Cahn and Benny Carter

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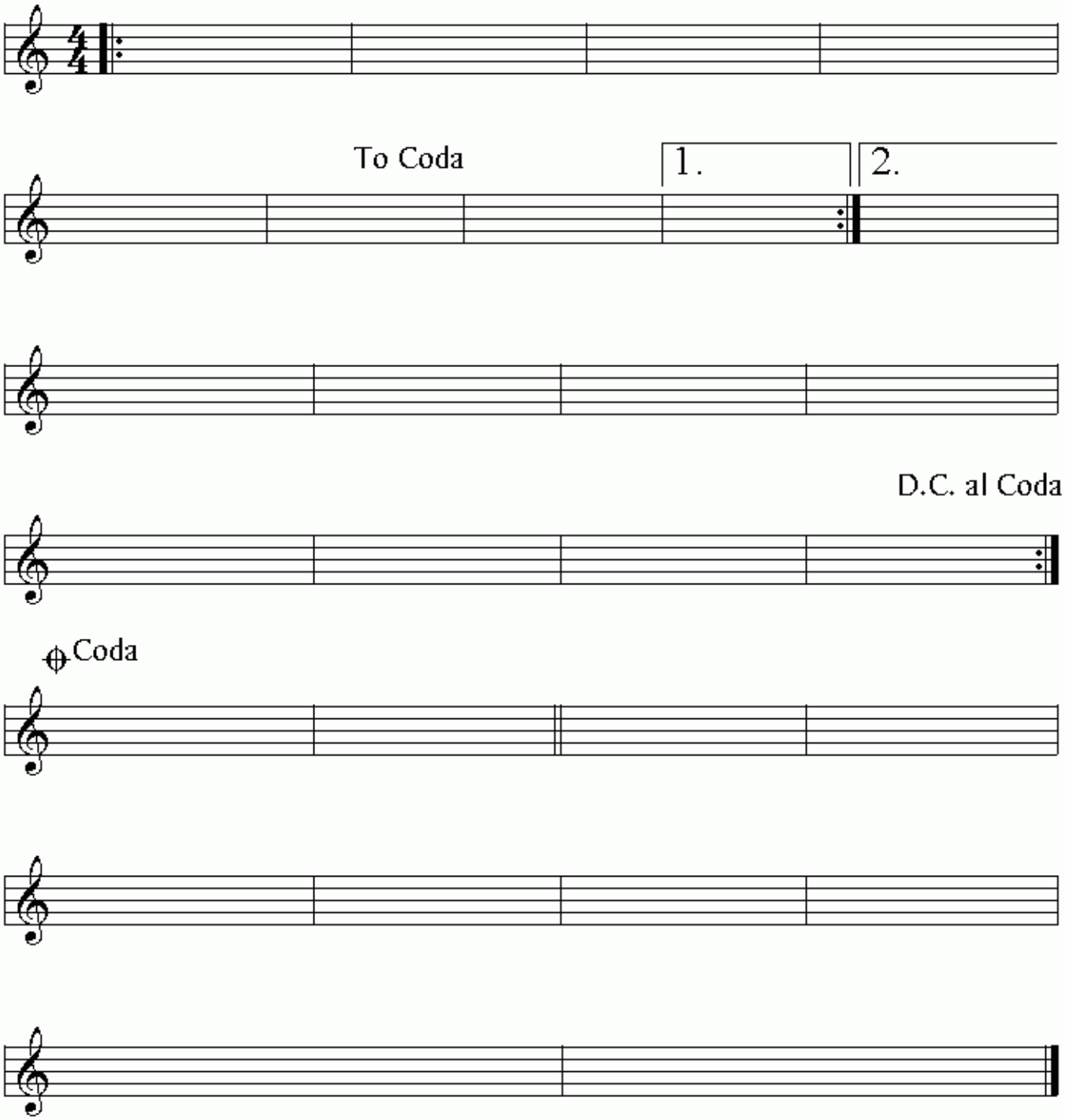

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Moon River

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Poco a poco Audri Hepburna

Words by Johnny Mercer, Music by Henry Mancini

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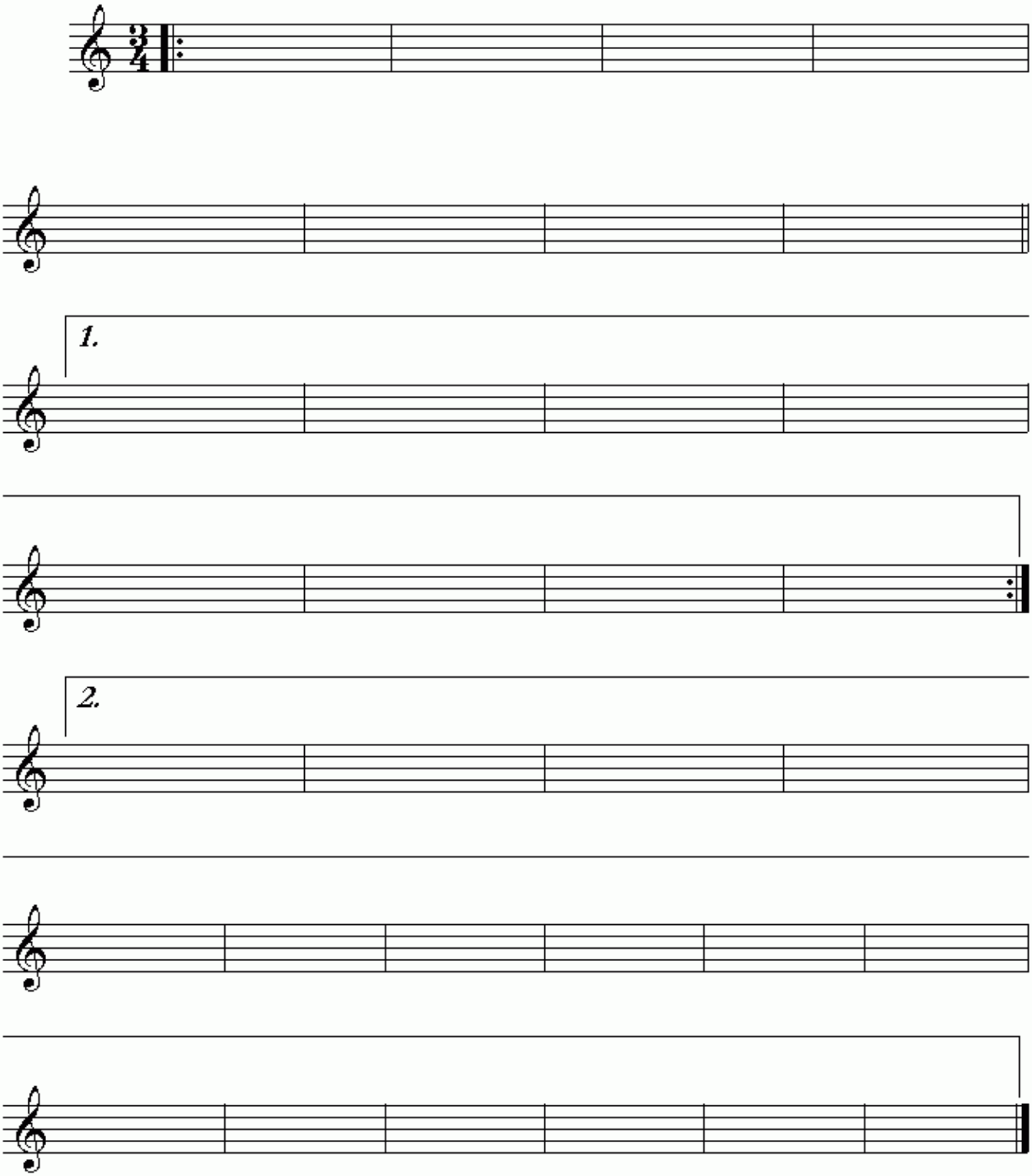

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Coming up in Book Two ...

What's Next on the Bookmark?

Book Two will take the Bookmark System to a new level, and increase your ability to play basslines that are more than just roots.

Now roots are great, and it is amazing how many songs you can play using just roots and still sound perfectly supportive, perfectly rhythmic, and completely musical.

In Book Two, we'll introduce 'leading tones' which just means playing a note *before* you play the root. It sounds remarkably good, and it's remarkably simple.

Further, Book Two will introduce you to playing Triads (root, third, and fifth) in several rhythmic patterns so that you'll have more choices for playing songs.

For example, you'll learn the Habanero, and its cousin the Matilda rhythm. With just the simplest of rhythms on the chords in your right hand you can create compelling and rhythmic sounds. They can sound quite busy, but they're easy to play.

You'll learn about the Bossa beat (and to get a head start see the bonus section of this book to start learning the common and useful 'latin' pulse, which is in fact the Bossa Bass rhythm).

In Book Two, you'll learn two new 'Cycles' or chord progressions. First you'll learn the 'Jazz Cycle' (also called the 'Two-Fives'). This simple progression occurs over and over and over again in so many songs.

This is where the minor chords come in, and you'll learn to weave those into your Master Exercise so that they're comfortable and familiar to your fingers.

You'll learn the 'Son of Jazz Cycle' the famous 'Popcorn Changes' or 'Ice-Cream Changes' which have been immortalized in Blue Moon, (I Can't Help) Falling in Love with You, The Seine, I Like Peanut Butter, and perhaps ten thousand other songs.

In Book Two, you will also learn another set of right-hand folded chords which use three notes each and produce a denser sound with smooth 'voice-leading'. A completely different sound, but it comes straight out of the basic Bookmark system which you already know.

Also in Book Two, of course, more songs.

After you've gained some experience with the Bookmark System, you will be able to play a wide variety of songs. If you are diligent, you can play every one of them differently. That is to say, only *you* will know that you are playing them all using the same basic system. Your listeners will just think that you're a very good musician.

And, of course, you will be.

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Bonus Section

The 'Latin' Pulse

Here's a question: What are the most basic beats for playing bass notes?

Here are our suggested answers:

1. Playing one note (the chord's root) ON the 'one' beat of each measure. If you were counting '1-2-3-4' for the measure, you'd be playing 'Note-2-3-4-Note-2-3-4.'
2. Playing one note (the chord's root) exactly ONCE on each beat of the measure. If you were counting '1-2-3-4' for the measure, you'd be playing 'Note-Note-Note-Note' in each measure.
3. Playing the 'Latin Pulse', which contains three notes (the chord's root) in each measure. But we have to break the measure down a little further, because in the Latin Pulse the notes are not evenly spaced. If you were counting '1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and' for each measure, you'd be playing 'Note-and-2-Note-Note-and-4-and' in each measure.

Just to make sure we've described that Latin Pulse clearly, we'll diagram the rhythm another way. Let's assume you are counting '1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and' for each measure. We will underline the three places where your notes go —

'**1** - and - 2 - **and** - **3** - and - 4 - and '

That's pretty clear, right?

What's a good Right-Hand Rhythm?

There is actually a syncopated right hand pattern which in latin 'Samba' or 'Bossa Nova' songs (as done by American jazz musicians) is the part played by the 'clave'. If you're not familiar, the clave is two cylinders of polished wood struck together to produce a bright and musical clicking rhythm which cuts through the very busy latin rhythms of the horn section and piano to keep everybody together. The Samba and Bossa Nova clave rhythm differ only by one note, and both of them are used with a bass pattern as shown above..

If you know this clave rhythm, then when you can play the left-hand bass pulse, then work in the right hand chord using the clave rhythm.

If you don't know the clave rhythm, or if you have trouble with it, then start with simpler right-hand patterns, such as —

1. Strike one right-hand chord on the ONE of each measure.
2. Strike one right-hand chord on each of the four beats of each measure.
3. Strike one right-hand chord on each of the two 'back-beats' in each measure. Playing on the back-beat just means playing on beats '2' and '4.' It's the same old back-beat that most rock songs use on the snare drum to keep everybody together.

More on the Latin Pulse

In Book Two, we'll go more deeply into the Latin Pulse, and for those who don't know the clave rhythm, we'll learn it in Book Two.

But for now, the 'Latin Pulse' is a general-purpose rhythm which sounds good on almost any 'latin-type' rhythmic song which needs a pulsing feel from the bass, so you might as well learn it so you can play it automatically without thought.

If you choose to work as a professional bass player, you can earn hundreds of thousands of dollars playing this one rhythm. Of course, it will take a few years!

The Latin Pulse is frequently done with the chord's root on the 'One' and the chord's fifth on the 'and - 3' beats. If you wish, work out how to do this, keeping strict fingering within the Nine Holy Notes. That is, wherever the root falls, that's where you play it with the finger you always use on that note. And wherever the chord's fifth falls, that's where you play it with the finger you always use on that note!

So until Book Two, when we'll expand on the Latin Pulse plus the true Bossa Pulse and some other Latin American things that will propel your touch-style bass playing into new levels of complex sound from simple elements, get back to your roots!

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Bonus Section: Bonus Songs #5-#12 Notes

#5 Hello, Young Lovers

This song will only appear in the printed and bound copy of this book if you have purchased the book or obtained it with a Mobius instrument.

#6 We Kiss in a Shadow

This song will only appear in the printed and bound copy of this book if you have purchased the book or obtained it with a Mobius instrument.

#7 Flammy Tammy Moo

This song has chords and structure similar to 'Fly Me to the Moon.'

#8 Your Awful Knees

This song has chords and structure similar to 'Autumn Leaves.'

#9 My Trusty Yurt

This song has chords and structure similar to 'Only Trust Your Heart.'

#10 Mood Reaver

This song has chords and structure similar to 'Moon River.'

#11 CircumNavigation

This is an artificial song, written to contain only Major Seventh Chords, and going completely around the 'Circle of Fifths', so that it hits every Major Seventh Chord along the way.

Because it is in effect changing keys constantly with every measure, you will see lots of accidentals in the melody, which is what lots of key changes do for you.

So it's not the easiest song for a beginner to play the melody, but it's a great song for a beginner to practice the chords!

12 Sailing Away

This is an artificial song, written to go around the 'Circle of Fifths' using repeating II-V-I chord patterns. (If this is gibberish don't be worried, because it will make sense later.)

Again, because you are changing keys often, in this case every two measures, there are more than the usual amount of accidentals in the melody line. So, again, it's not the easiest melody for new folk to play, but it's great chords for new folk to play!

In this structure, you only hit half the chords. (If you wanted to practice the other chords, you'd need to shift the entire song either up or down one half step. This is not a bad exercise for practicing your chords.).

Want to *Hear* the Songs?

- Bonus Songs #7-#12 have been recorded and are available for your listening pleasure online. Just start up your browser, and visit the 'Songs Archive' found at —

  http://www.megatar.com/documents/

- If you are reading this book as a PDF file on your computer, and you're connected to the internet, then just click on the link above and visit the "Song Archive."

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Hello, Young Lovers

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Molto Soppisimo

Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, Music by Richard Rogers

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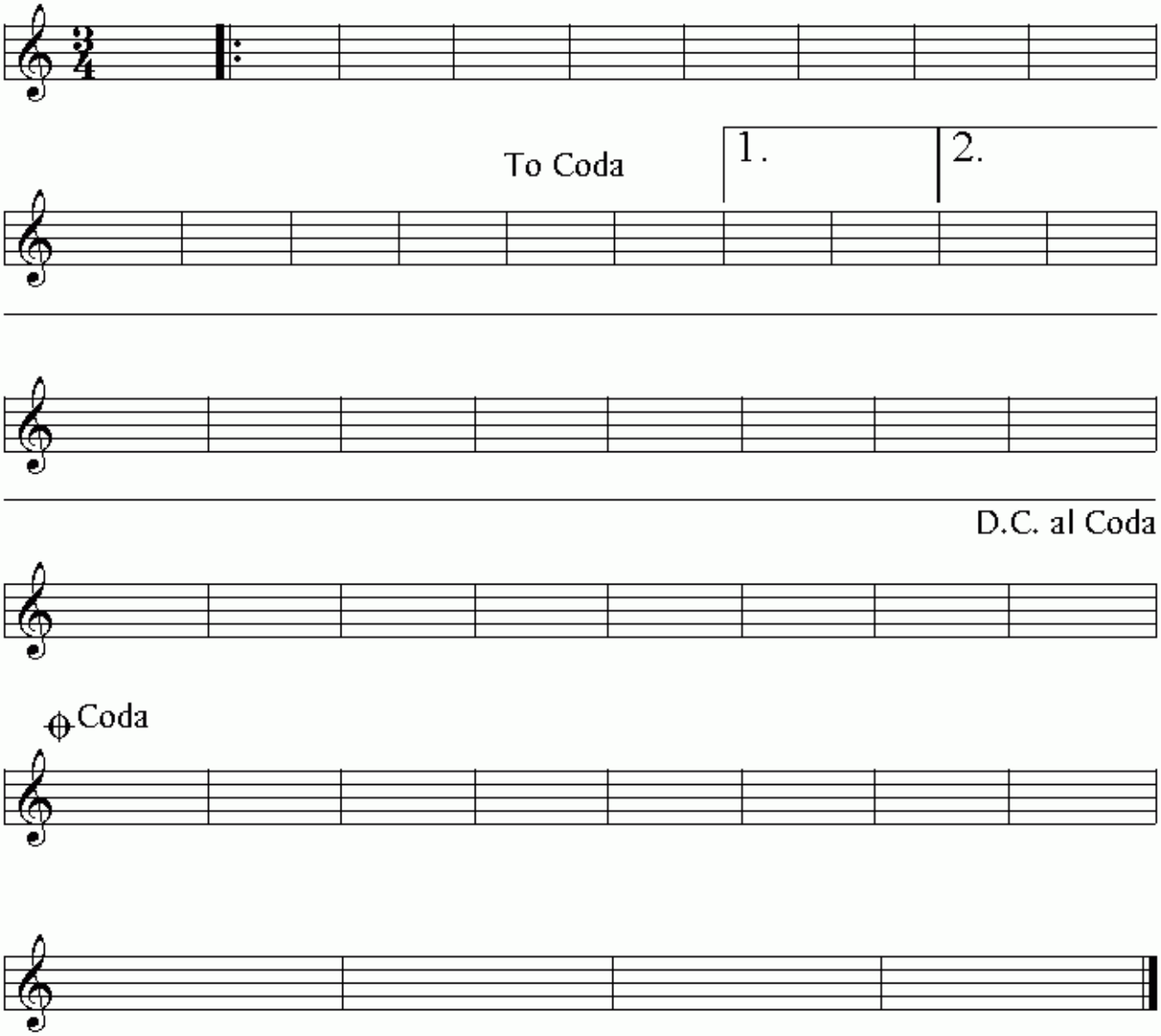

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We Kiss in a Shadow

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Slowly and Tenderly
Like you're all overcome
with lonesome love

Words by Oscar Hammerstein II, Music by Richard Rogers

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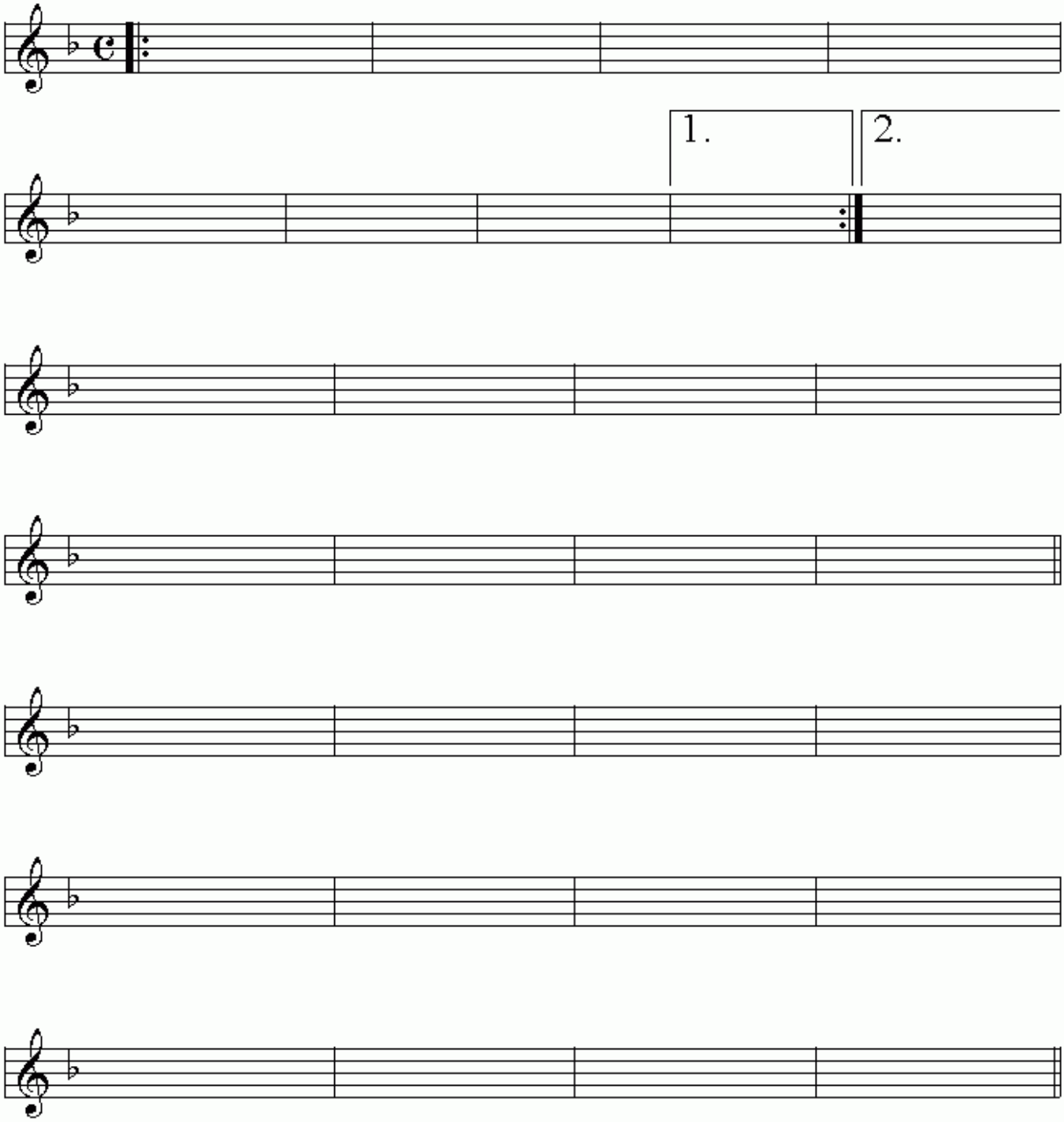

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Flammy Tammy Moo

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Loungio Lizardo Pragmante

Tempo = 132

Music by Maynard Keene, Lyrics by W. T. Thornton

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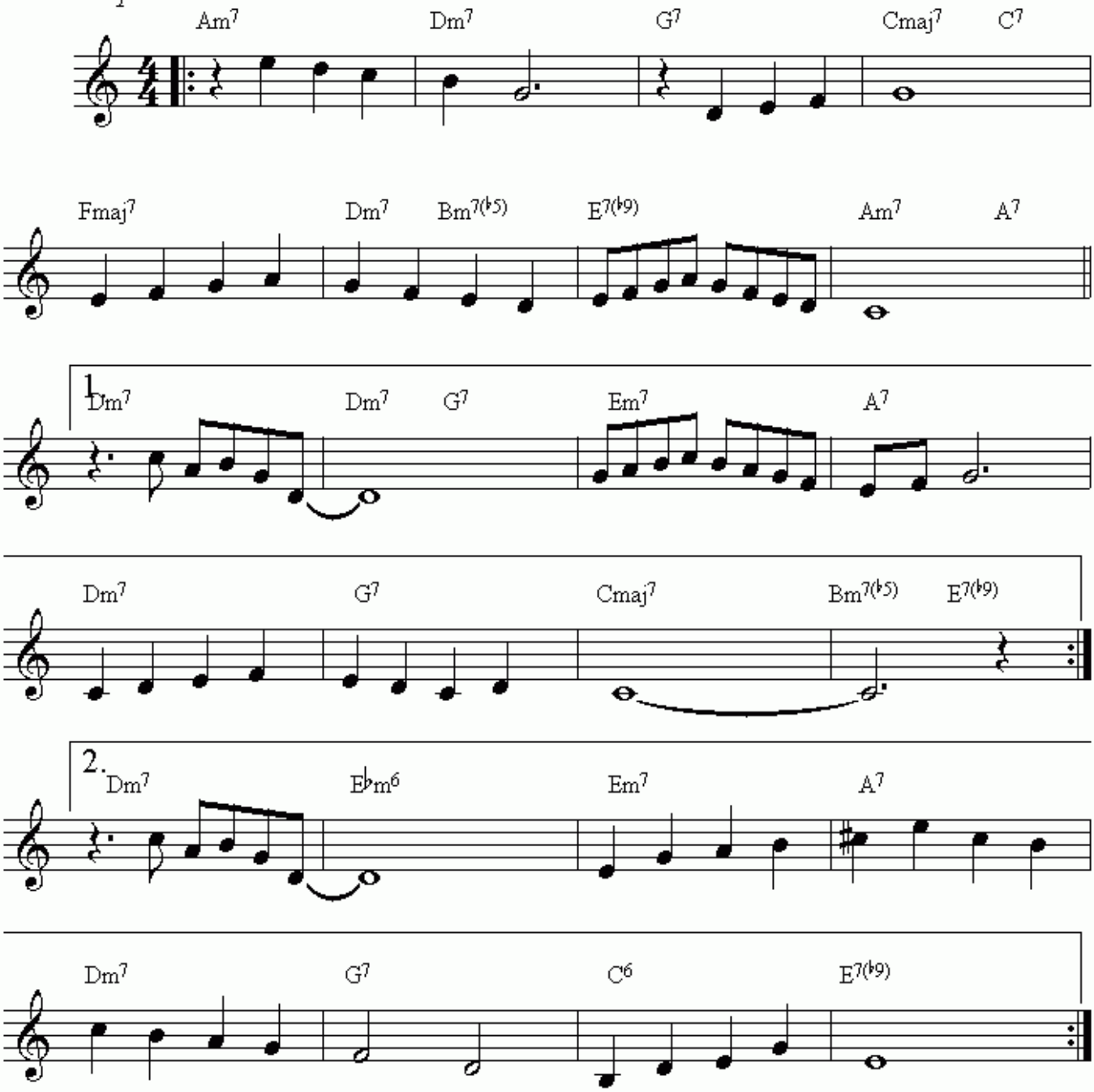

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Your Awful Knees

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Sadly, like raining and whimpering

Music by Maynard Keene, Lyrics by Ishmael Thor

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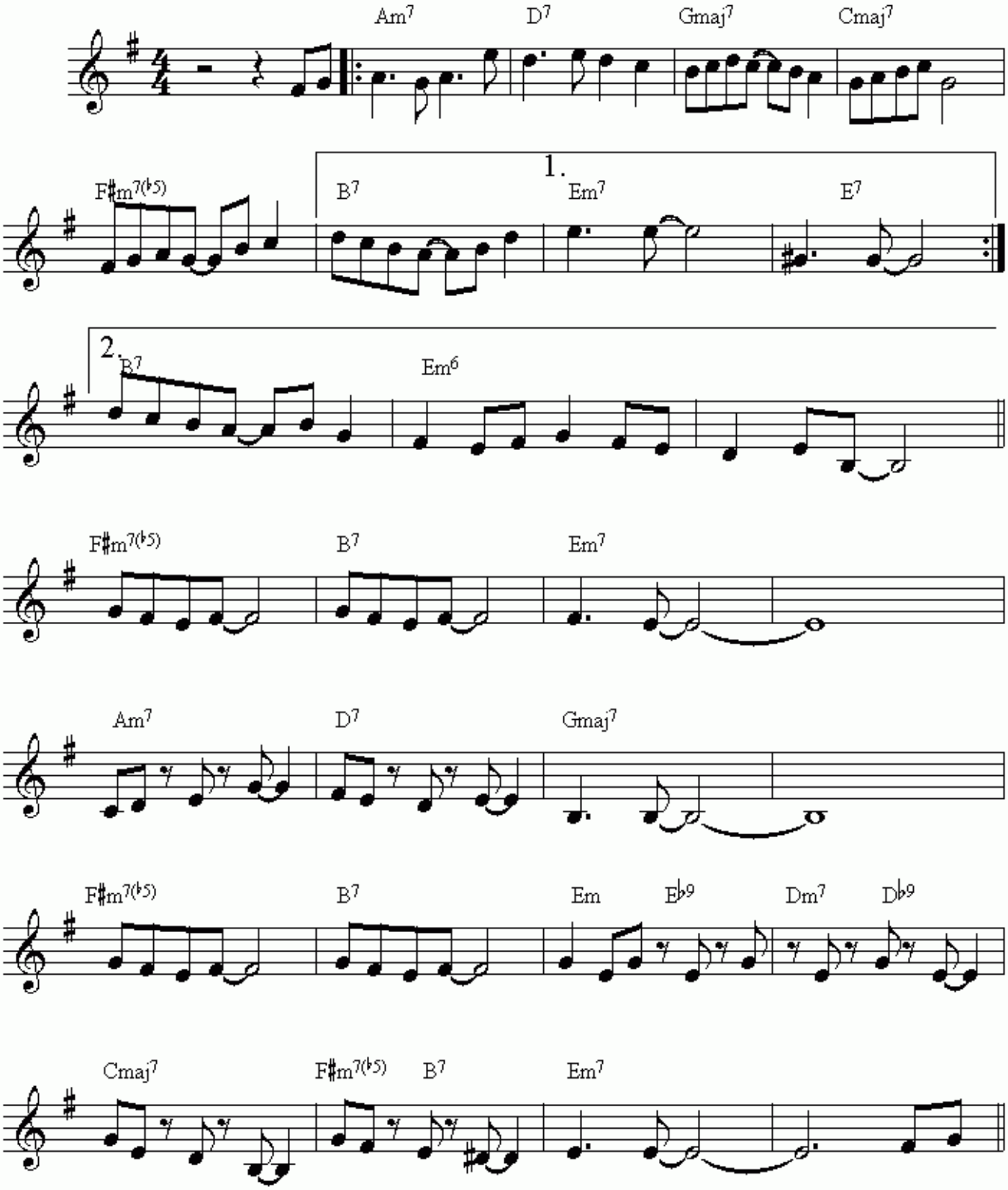

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My Trusty Yurt

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Slow and Dreamy Bossa, Melody Robato

Music and Lyrics by Maynard Keene

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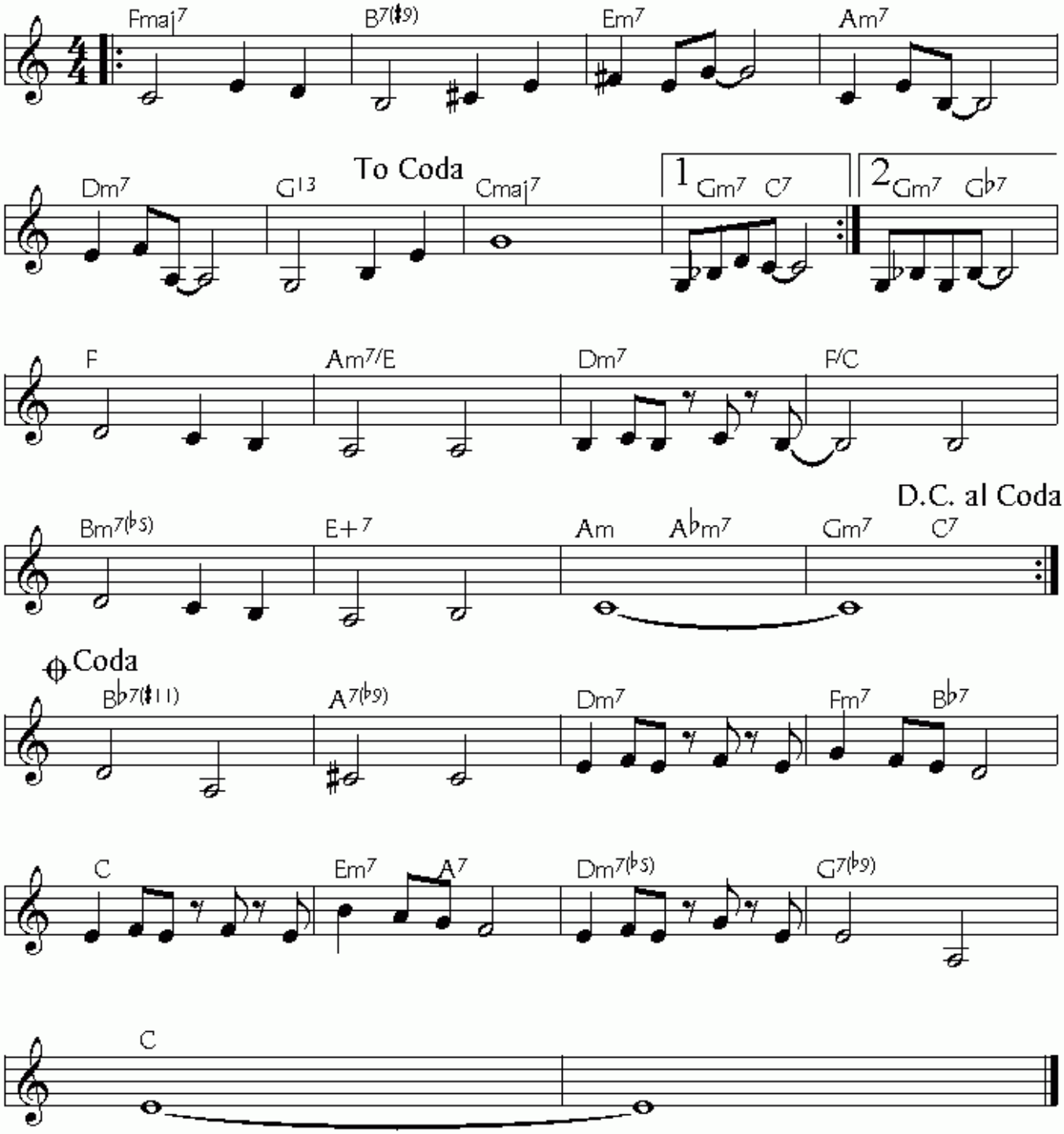

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Mood Reaver

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Poco a poco Audri Hepburna
Tempo = 96

Music by Maynard Keene, Lyrics by L. C. Rice
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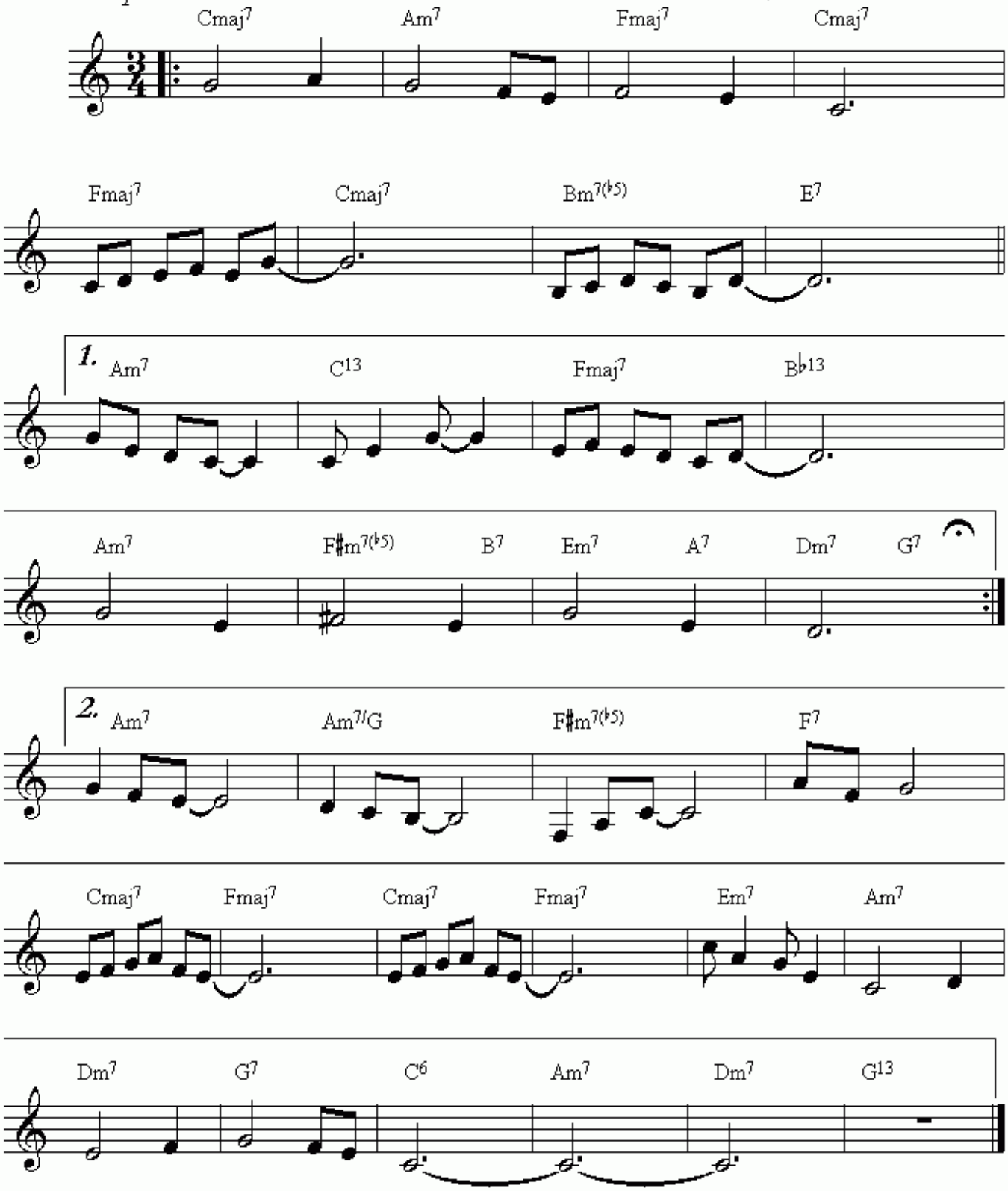

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Circumnavigation

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Al Circulo Al Dente
Tempo = 144

Music by Maynard Keene, Lyrics by Ishmael Thor
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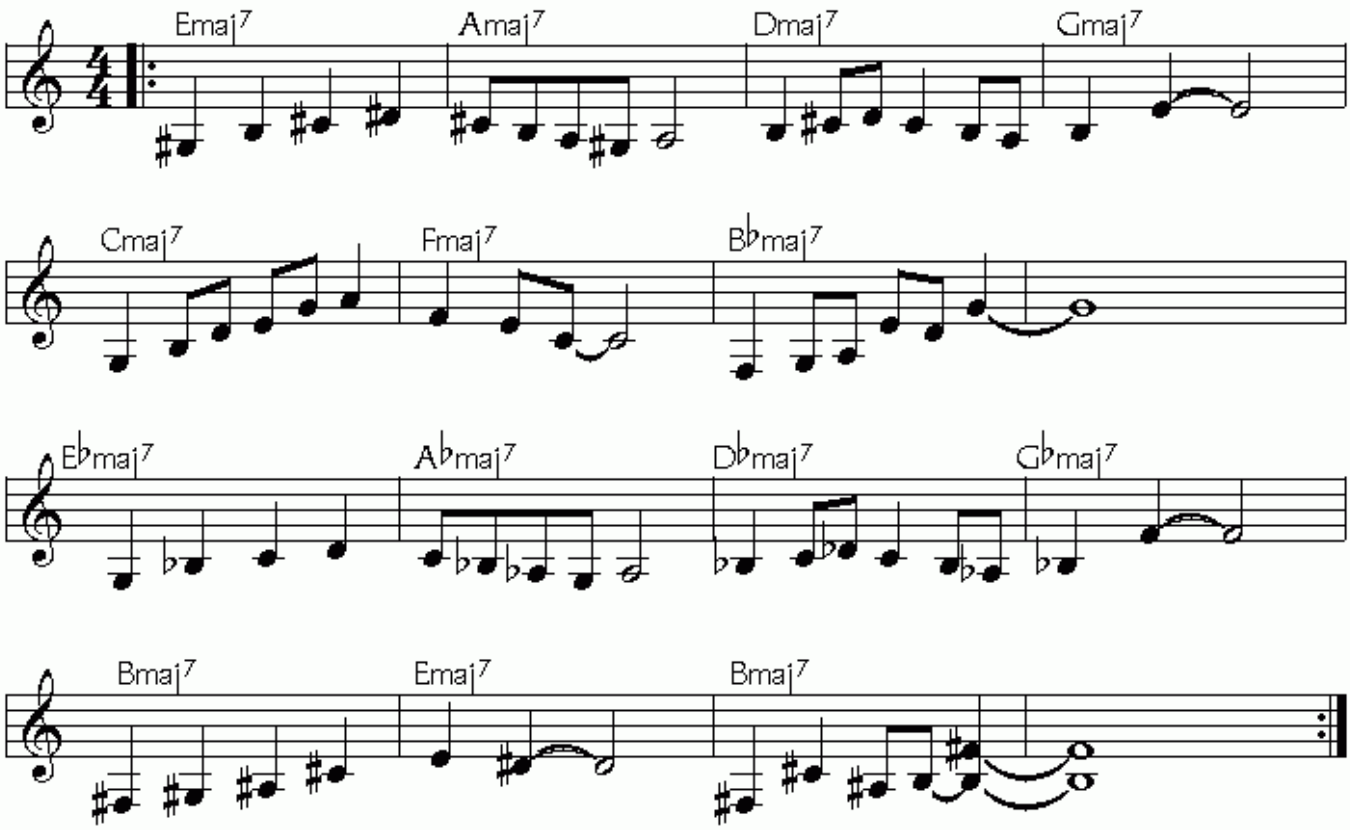

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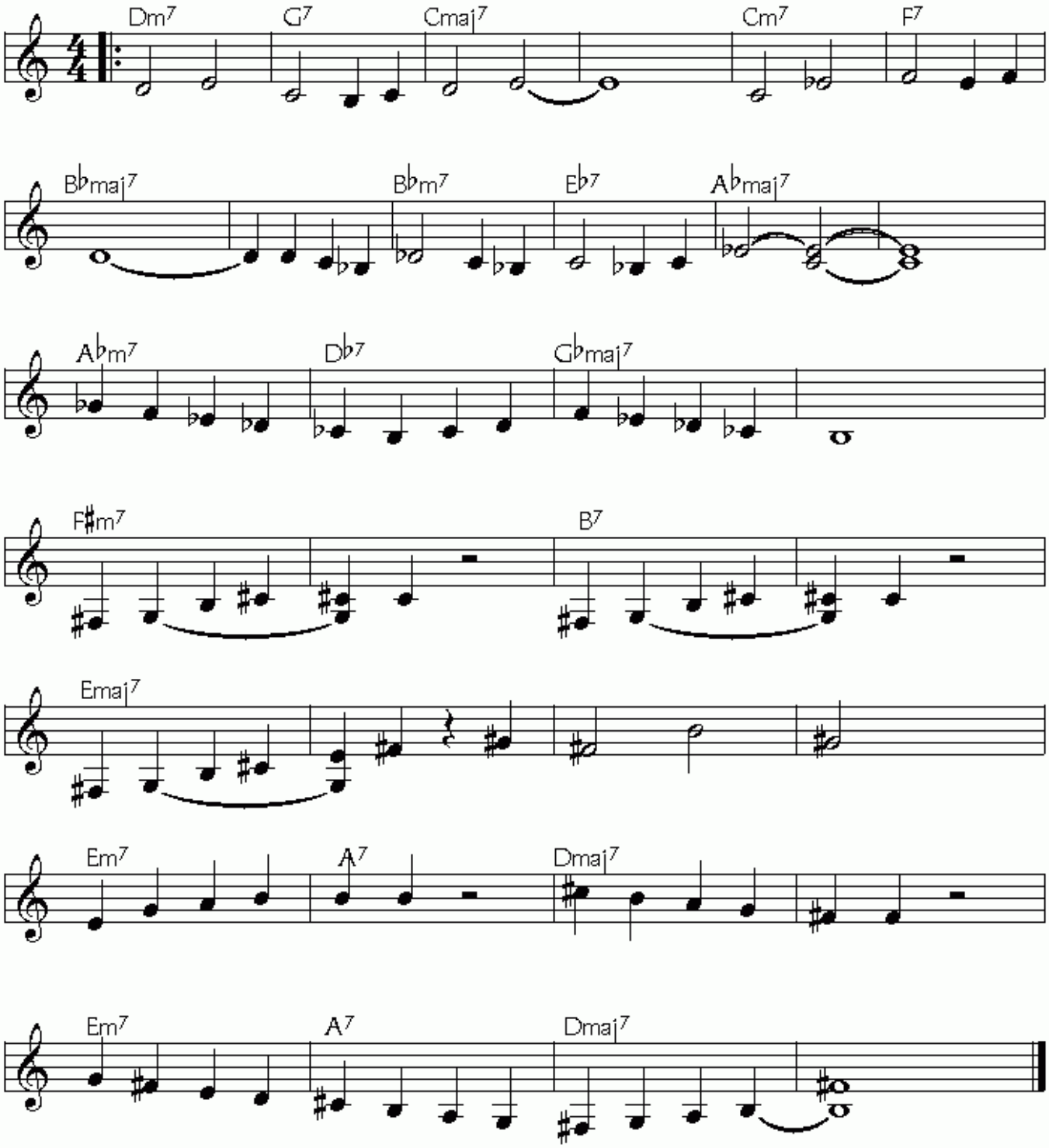
Easy Touch-Style Bassics

Sailing Away

Arrangement: Henri DuPont

Play Floating and Robato
Tempo = 120

Music and Lyrics by Maynard Keene
(c) 2000 Cosmopolitan Music Publications



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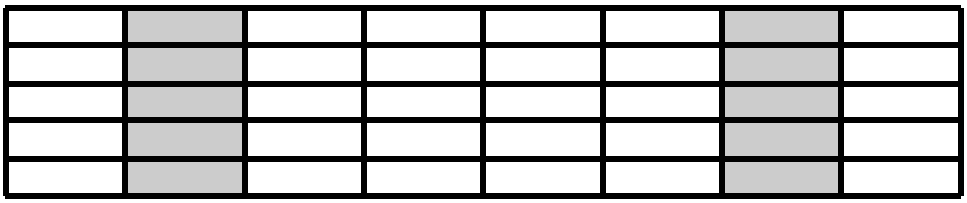
Bonus Section: Blank Charts

Blank Charts for Bass-Bottom Megatar or Inverted-Fifths Instrument



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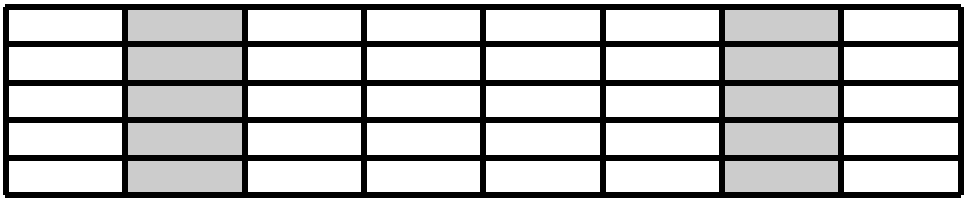

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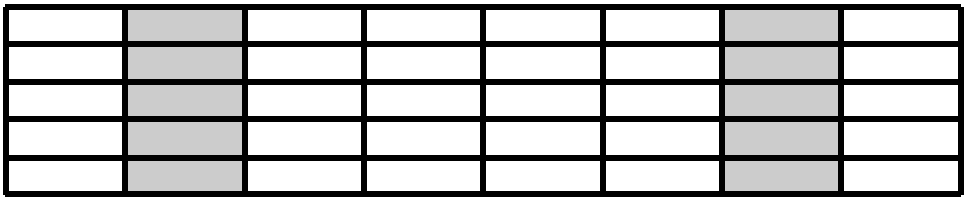

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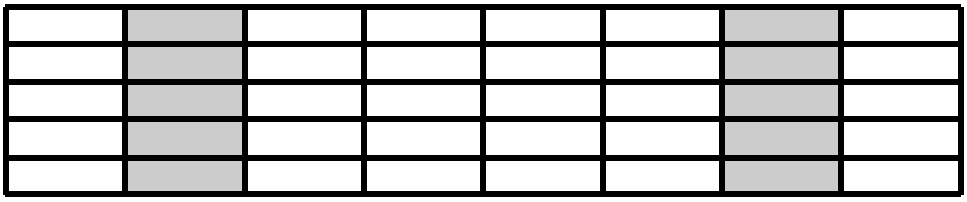

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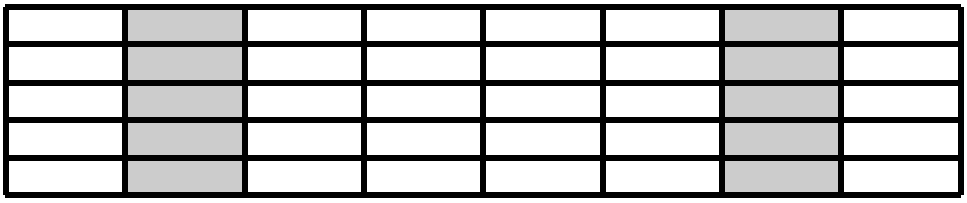

Fret: __ Fret: __

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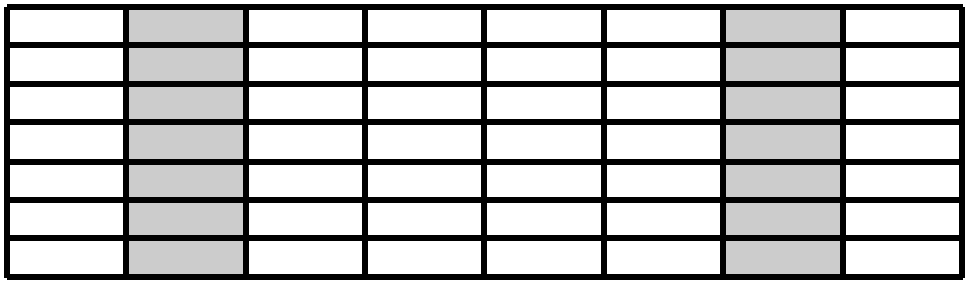
Bonus Section: Blank Charts

Blank Charts for Six, Seven, or Eight-String Bass



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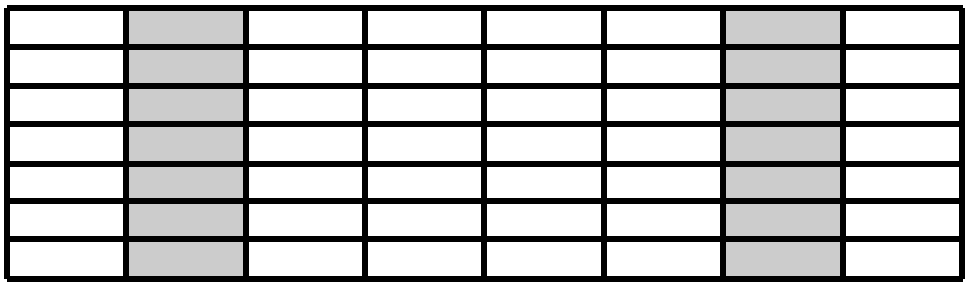

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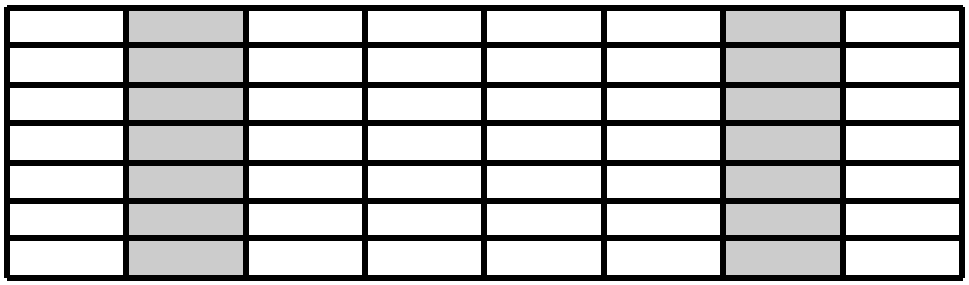

Fret: __ Fret: __

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Appendix

Concise Bookmark System Summary

The Bookmark System is a Fixed Position system where each hand plays in place, with fairly strict fingering using three fingers per string.

The Bookmark System teaches your fingers to be in the right place at the right time, and it forms the basis for Rhythm Bass (bass notes plus rhythmic chords), and other musical ways to play music. The Bookmark System consists of a Master Exercise usually done as a Warm-Up each day. This Master Exercise has three parts —

1. Use the 'Six Noble Rhythms' on
2. The Folk Cycle and the Blues Cycle chord progressions, using
3. The Chord Forms with fingering as shown.

The daily Warm-Up should be done with good posture, using

1. Your mind's 'vision' to picture the chord-forms on your fretboard, but
2. Playing the notes by 'touch', and
3. Using your 'ears' to hear how well you're succeeding.

Notes should be clear and initially played legato. Play ON the fret, and use your fingertips to feel the fret beneath the string.

Raw speed does not matter. Playing exactly on the rhythm with clear tone does matter.

Practice slowly enough so that 85-95% of your practice is without errors. End each exercise on an execution that was done correctly.

The Six Noble Rhythms	
LH Arp (Left-Hand Arpeggiate)	**RH Arp (Right-Hand Arpeggiate)**
LH Arp	**RH Roots**
LH Roots	**RH Roots**
LH Roots	**RH Arp**
LH Roots	**RH GT-Chords (Guide-Tones)**
LH Arp	**RH GT-Chords (Guide-Tones)**

The Six Noble Rhythms Chart

1. With left hand, arpeggiate the chord-tones, from the bottom of the chart to the highest note and then back down, each note on the beat. With right hand, do exactly the same. If needed learn each hand separately, but then practice with both hands playing each note simultaneously. This is the most basic exercise and from this flow all other techniques.
2. With left hand, arpeggiate the chord-tones, but with your right hand, play only the roots of the chord, in any simple rhythmic manner.
3. With left hand, play the chord's root, and with the right hand, also play the chord's root. Use the same finger to play the root that you were using for that note when arpeggiating the chord tones. Play the two hands' notes together or separately in any simple rhythmic manner.
4. With the left hand, play the chord's root, and with the right hand arpeggiate the chord's tones up and down.
5. With the left hand, play only the chord's root, and with the right hand play the Guide-Tones as a chord in any simple rhythmic manner.
6. With the left hand, arpeggiate the chord's tones up and down, and with the right hand, play the Guide-Tones (chord's third and seventh) as a chord by striking the third and seventh simultaneously in any simple rhythmic manner.

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The Folk Cycle

Day of the Month	I Chord (Root)	IV Chord	I Chord (Root)	V Chord
	CM7	FM7	CM7	G7
	BbM7	EbM7	BbM7	F7
	AbM7	DbM7	AbM7	Eb7
	GbM7	CbM7	GbM7	Db7
	EM7	AM7	EM7	B7
	DM7	GM7	DM7	A7
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	GM7	CM7	GM7	D7
	FM7	BbM7	FM7	C7
	EbM7	AbM7	EbM7	Bb7
	DbM7	GbM7	DbM7	Ab7
	BM7	EM7	BM7	F#7
	AM7	DM7	AM7	E7

The Blues Cycle

Day of the Month	I Chord (Root)	IV Chord	I Chord (Root)	V Chord
	C7	F7	C7	G7
	Bb7	Eb7	Bb7	F7
	Ab7	Db7	Ab7	Eb7
	Gb7	Cb7	Gb7	Db7
	E7	A7	E7	B7
	D7	G7	D7	A7
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	G7	C7	G7	D7
	F7	Bb7	F7	C7
	Eb7	Ab7	Eb7	Bb7
	Db7	Gb7	Db7	Ab7
	B7	E7	B7	F#7
	A7	D7	A7	E7

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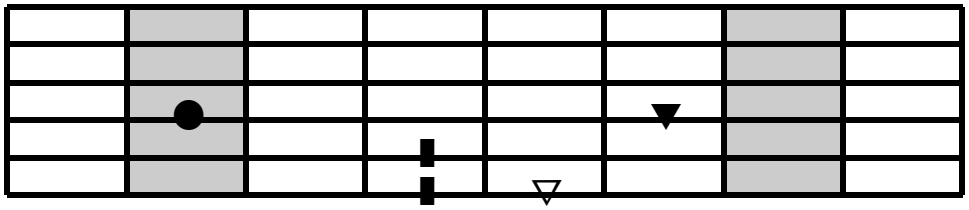
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: "A"

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just 'Seventh Chord'), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the 'Minor Seven Flat Five' chord.

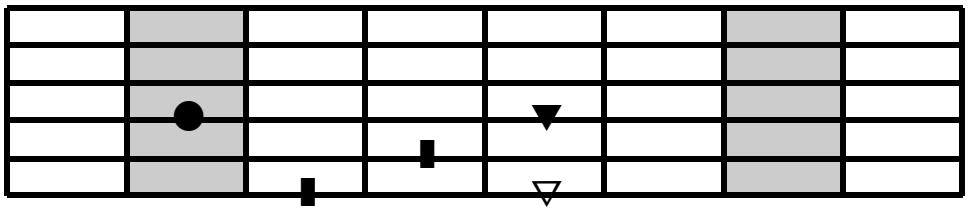
Bass-Bottom Megatar— AM7



5, M7
M3
M7, 1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

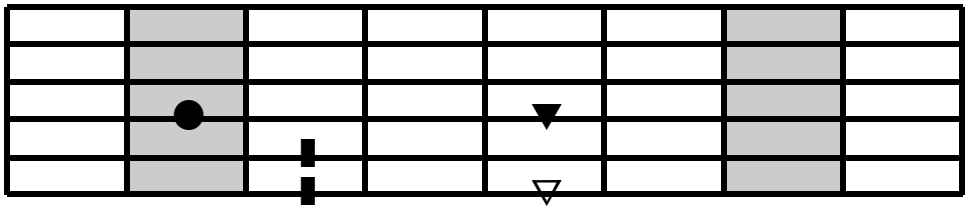
Bass-Bottom Megatar— A7



5, b7
M3
M7, 1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Am7



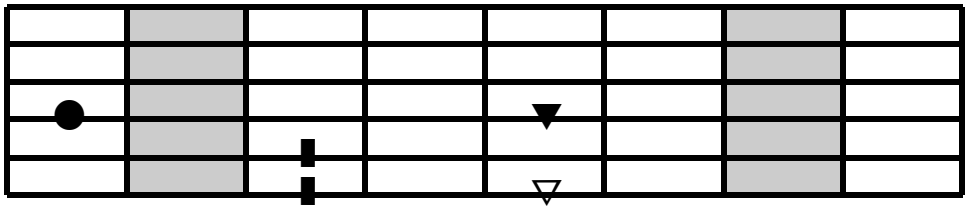
5, b7
b3
b7, 1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Am7b5



b5, b7
b3
b7, 1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

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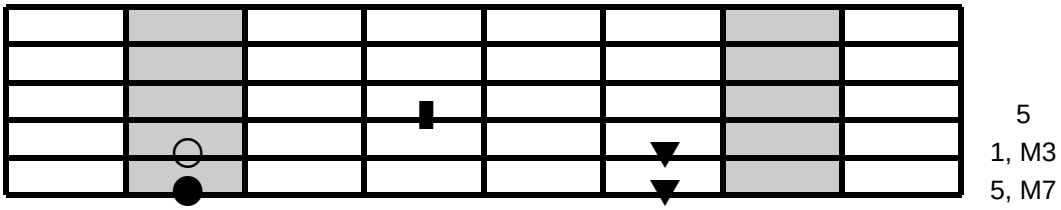
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: “B”

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just ‘Seventh Chord’), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the ‘Minor Seven Flat Five’ chord.

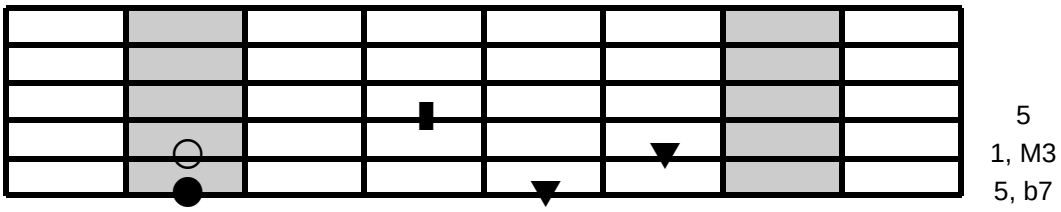
Bass-Bottom Megatar— BM7



5
1, M3
5, M7

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

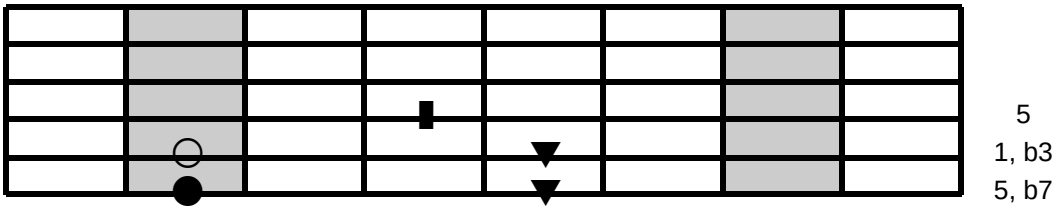
Bass-Bottom Megatar— B7



5
1, M3
5, b7

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Bm7



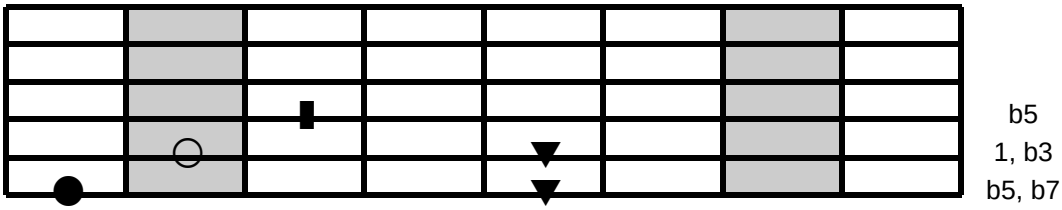
5
1, b3
5, b7

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor’s Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Bm7b5



b5
1, b3
b5, b7

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

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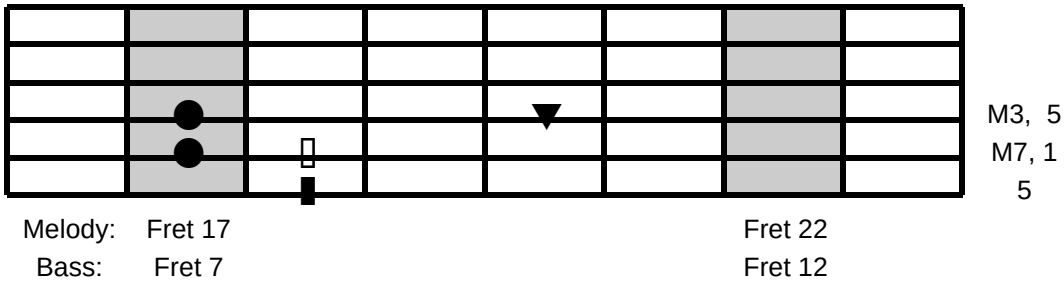
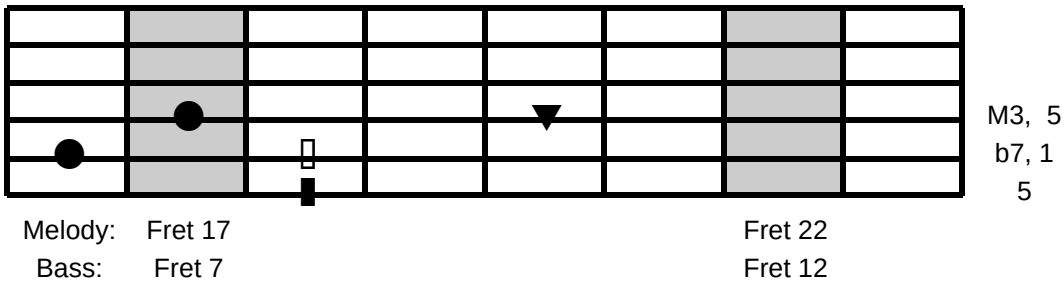
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: "C"

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just 'Seventh Chord'), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the 'Minor Seven Flat Five' chord.

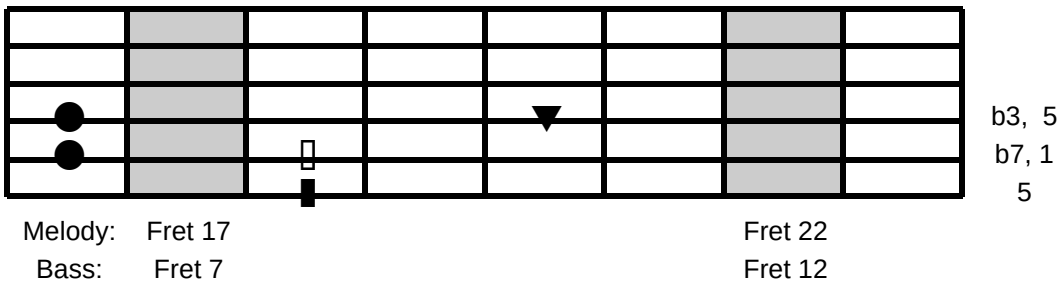
Bass-Bottom Megatar— CM7



Bass-Bottom Megatar— C7



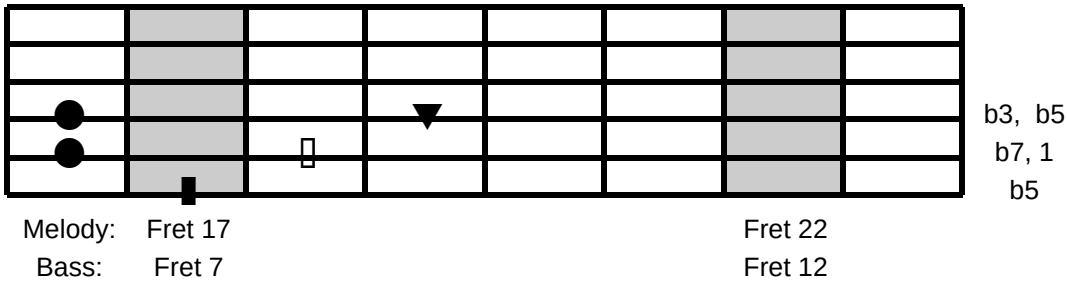
Bass-Bottom Megatar— Cm7



Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Cm7b5



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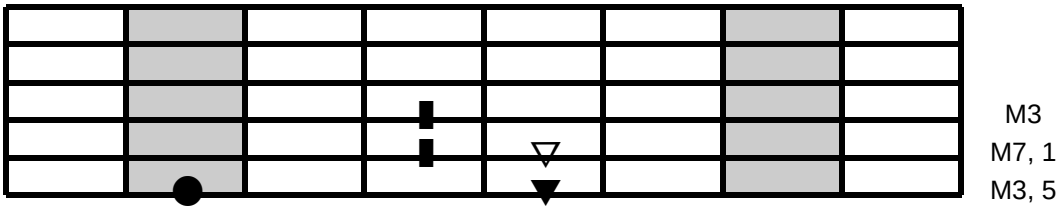
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: “D”

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just ‘Seventh Chord’), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the ‘Minor Seven Flat Five’ chord.

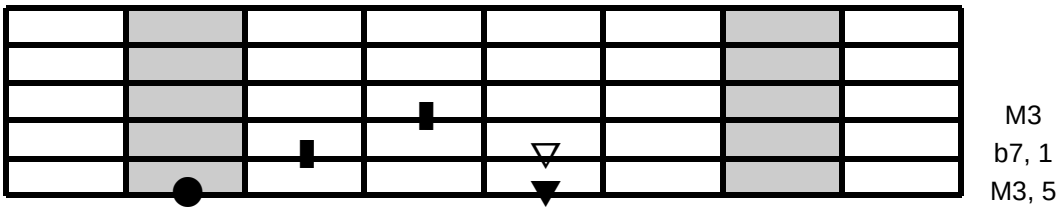
Bass-Bottom Megatar— DM7



M3
M7, 1
M3, 5

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

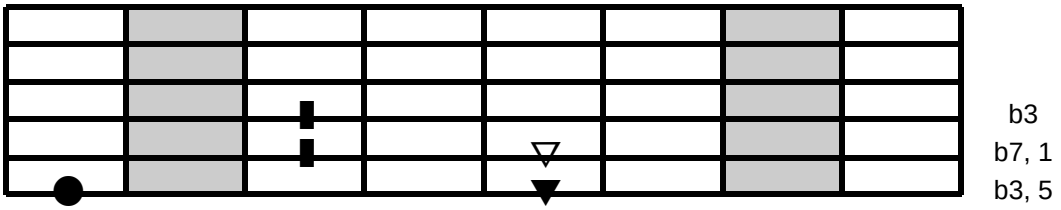
Bass-Bottom Megatar— D7



M3
b7, 1
M3, 5

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Dm7



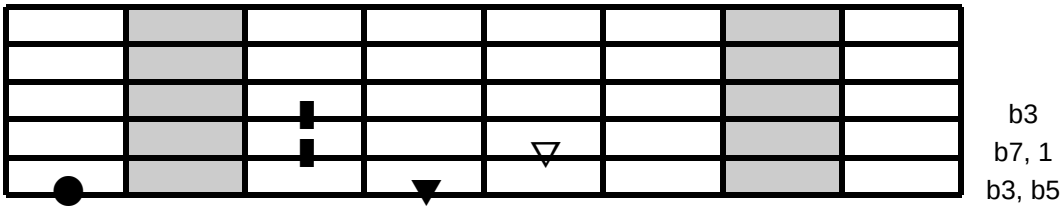
b3
b7, 1
b3, 5

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor’s Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Dm7b5



b3
b7, 1
b3, b5

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

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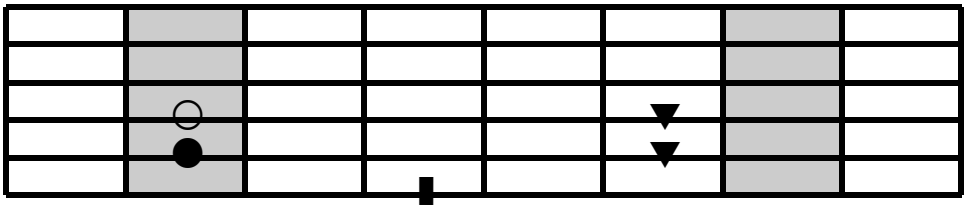
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: "E"

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just 'Seventh Chord'), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the 'Minor Seven Flat Five' chord.

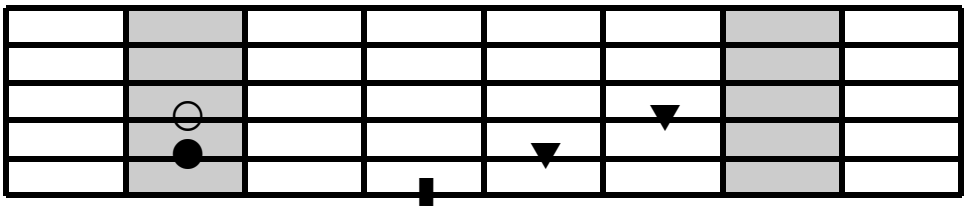
Bass-Bottom Megatar— EM7



1, M3
5, M7
M3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

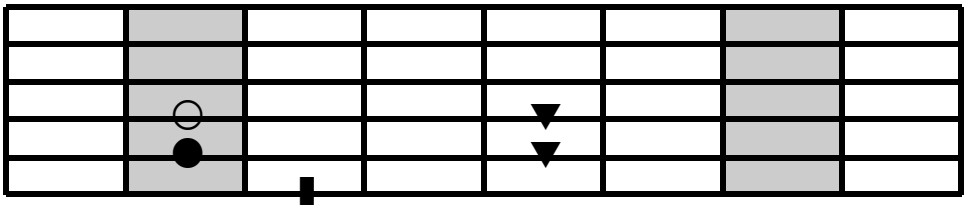
Bass-Bottom Megatar— E7



1, M3
5, b7
M3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Em7



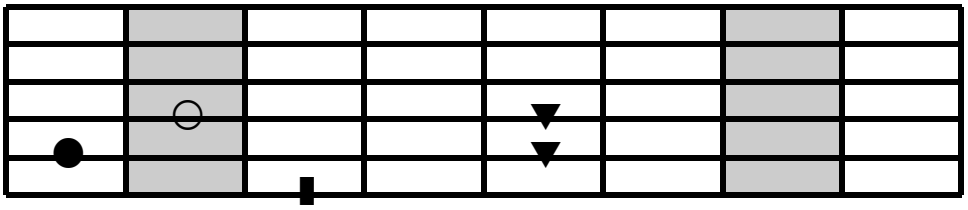
1, b3
5, b7
b3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Em7b5



1, b3
b5, b7
b3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

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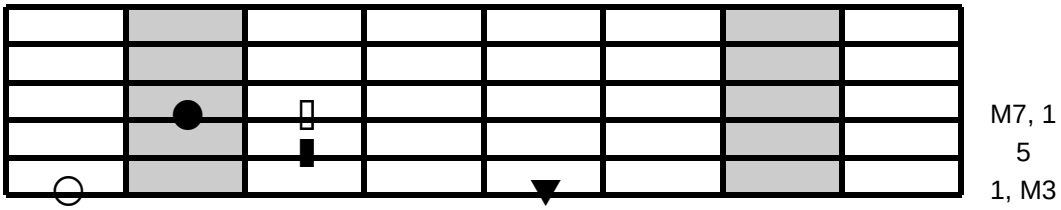
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: “F”

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just ‘Seventh Chord’), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the ‘Minor Seven Flat Five’ chord.

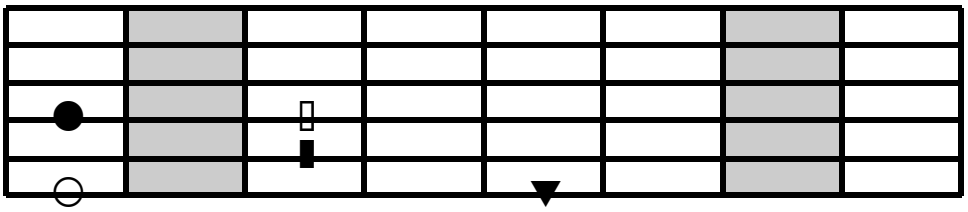
Bass-Bottom Megatar— FM7



M7, 1
5
1, M3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

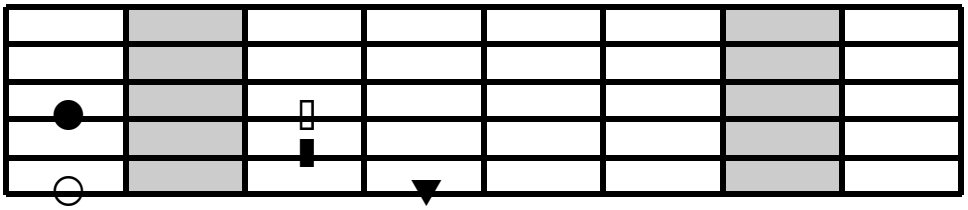
Bass-Bottom Megatar— F7



b7, 1
5
1, M3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Fm7



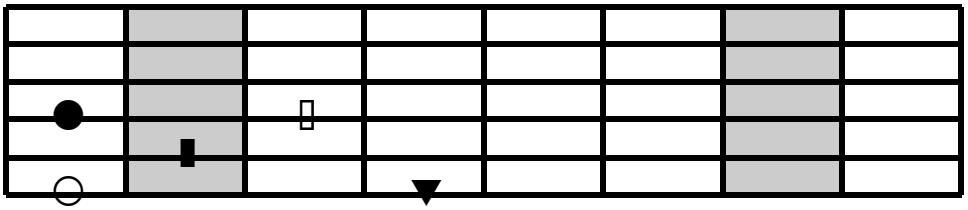
b7, 1
5
1, b3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor’s Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Fm7b5



b7, 1
b5
1, b3

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

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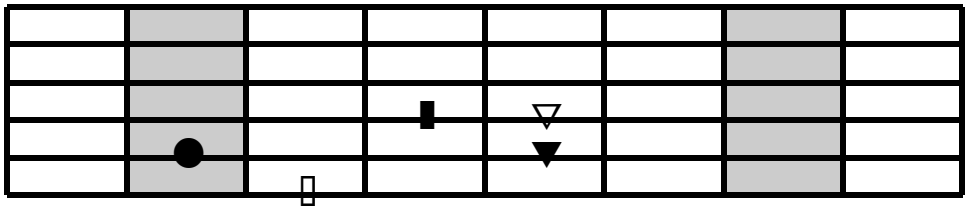
Chords for Bass-Bottom Megatar: "G"

These four chord forms show how the Major Seventh chord has its seventh dropped to become the Dominant Seventh (or just 'Seventh Chord'), and the Seventh Chord has its third dropped to become the Minor Seventh chord, and the Minor Seventh chord has its fifth dropped to become the 'Minor Seven Flat Five' chord.

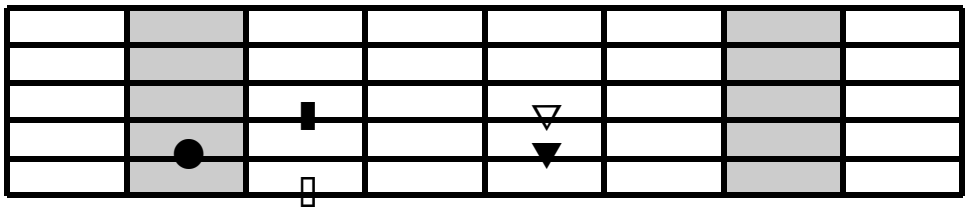
Bass-Bottom Megatar— GM7



M7, 1
M3, 5
1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

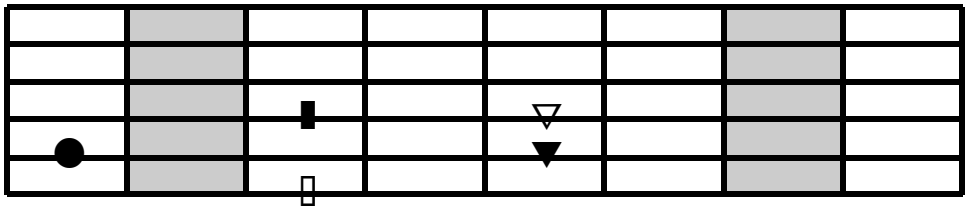
Bass-Bottom Megatar— G7



b7, 1
M3, 5
1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Gm7



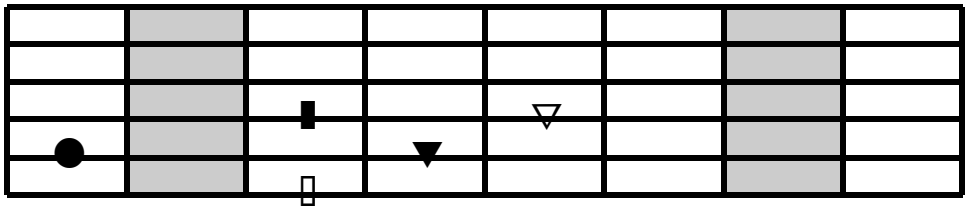
b7, 1
b3, 5
1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

Traktor's Finger Symbols

1 = circle
2 = bar
3 = down triangle
4 = X
Root = Hollow

Bass-Bottom Megatar— Gm7b5



b7, 1
b3, b5
1

Melody: Fret 17 Fret 22
Bass: Fret 7 Fret 12

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Eleven Reasons why a Bass-Player should learn this method at Fret 7

Reason #1 You adjust quickly to the wide neck. The neck is very wide! The easiest way to accustom your hand to this stretch is to work in the 'greatest stretch' position. At Fret Seven position, your hand will *not* confuse *this* neck with the neck on your Jazz Bass!

By working at this 'worst case' location, with less carry-over and interference from your prior learning about playing conventional bass.

Reason #2 The bottom string is the easiest to locate by touch. Best playing results when you play by touch, and this method teaches touch-play fast. When you're 'feeling' for your position, the easiest string to locate in each string group is the lowest one. Fret Two position doesn't use the bottom string, but Fret Seven position does. Better.

Reason #3 It feels natural to play only Fretted Notes. As a bass-player you have a tendency to play notes on open strings. The more experience you have, the stronger this tendency, which *will* interfere with your learning this fixed-position, no-open-string system.

However, as a bass-player, when you're playing higher on the neck you have less tendency to play an open string. Therefore, when you initially learn at Fret Seven Position, you will have less interference from your existing habits.

Reason #4 You can play without running into the Sound Deadener. The sound-deadener is keeps the open strings from ringing in an unmusical fashion while playing by touch. But it presents two problems to your hand and fingers —

Firstly, to play the notes at fret one requires a bit more tapping effort to get similar volume as a note you tap at fret two and the rest of the fretboard. By initially learning at Fret Seven Position, we can defer learning this little bit of business. Later, when you're a capable player, learning this little bit of business is trivial. Why fight it now?

Nextly, when you *feel* the sound deadener with your hand or your fingers, this is something new and can annoy your hand and give you distraction. When first learning, who needs a distraction?

Reason #5 Visual Navigation is easier near the Familiar Fret-Marker at Seventh Fret. As a bass-player (or a guitar player) you're accustomed to seeing a fret marker at fret THREE. And here's this instrument with the big marker at fret TWO. This can create confusion between your old learning and your new learning.

There are navigational advantages in fret-marking at fret two, but during your first learning, this is a drawback and not an advantage. By starting at fret seven, this potential source of confusion can be easily set aside.

The fret markers at fret seven are already in the positions familiar to you, so let's learn there. Once playing by touch, then playing in the fret two area becomes easy.

Reason #6 It's easier to fret with your Third Finger. Many bass players, commonly playing at low positions where the hand stretches greatly, have developed the habit of fretting with the little finger (and sometimes they put the third finger on top of the little finger for increased strength).

But in this method, we fret with fingers one, two, and three (and the little finger is reserved for some special cases). If you are a bassist who is fretting with finger three for the first time, it may be easier at fret seven position because there's less stretch, less strength requirement, less habit.

Reason #7 You don't need to move your hand as much. Because frets are closer together at fret seven, your hand motion to reach notes is minimized. With your hand more stable, accuracy improves, and your speed of learning increases.

Reason #8 All chords fold in regular fashion at Fret Seven. In this method, you'll learn extremely regular ways to alter individual notes to alter chords. At Fret Seven position, all these alterations are completely regular. At Fret Two, because you run into the sound-deadener, there are a couple of chords you'll have to play differently.

You'll have greater learning speed to learn exceptions only after learning the 'regular way'.

Reason #9 All shapes translate exactly to your right hand, and to other-tuned instruments. There are no other tunings which run into the sound deadener as does 'Bass Bottom' tuning, and so by learning at Fret Seven, all shapes your left hand learns are identical to your right hand shapes, and to your left hand shapes on differently tuned instruments.

Reason #10 Easy to learn Fret Seven then move to Fret Two. We promise. When do you get to play at Fret Two? After book two.

Reason #11 It's better to be able to play in two positions than just in one position. Many bassists never learn to play much up on the neck. By learning at Fret Seven position, however, *you* will. Later, changing to Fret Two Position is easy.

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Pedagogy — A Special Note for Teachers regarding Fingering

In the Bookmark System, the fingering method presented diverges from classical fingering in one important aspect:

In the 'Bookmark System' presented herein, initial fingering uses only the first three fingers. The fourth finger has an important part in later books, but for reasons of taking things one step at a time we do not *begin* with all four fingers.

The emphasis in the Bookmark System is to learn approximately one octave of notes beneath each hand. The notes below the right hand will fall identically with the notes falling below the left hand, although on higher-pitched strings.

By training the two hands to work together, the two hands can advance quickly, because what they are learning is muscularly similar.

After they can work together, in a following section of this book, we will begin to separate out the movements of the left hand and the right hand, to develop hand independence, although still within an identical framework of notes on the fretboard.

In this way the student will initially learn (a) an octave of notes, (b) how to arpeggiate chords inside that octave of notes, and (c) how to then separate out different parts for each hand: for example, how to play a rhythmic bass part with the left hand while playing rhythmic chord tones with the right hand.

Seen another way, the student is learning where his notes appear on the fretboard, how to move his fingers, and how to quickly play useful music.

A 'Three-Fingered' System?

In classical guitar training, it would be far more common to train the musician to approach the fretboard on a 'one finger per fret' basis. Although such a system does not permit the musician to play a major-third interval on a single string without altering the 'one finger per fret' approach, it is a good basic approach which yields fluid playing, and it also tends to reduce hand movement somewhat.

In the Bookmark System, initially using only fingers one, two, and three, in some cases the hand will move a bit further (although the anchoring thumb on the rear of the fretboard will not be required to move).

The specific virtue of initially beginning with three fingers on three strings, and playing three notes on each of these strings is that the musician quickly learns to associate a specific finger with a specific note. Further, it makes each chord initially 'feel' the same to the hand. That is, the GMajor7 chord has the same basic muscular feeling as does the G7 chord and the Gminor7 chord. This yields rapid learning. And once again, because the two hands can be trained simultaneously, the student gains skills quickly, which most humans find rewarding, and this emotional reward promotes further learning.

So the Bookmark System is not basically a 'one finger per fret' system; instead, the Bookmark System is basically a 'one finger per *note*' system.

Classical Fingering ...

Basically is a
'One finger per *FRET*'
system.

Bookmark System Fingering ...

Basically is a
'One finger per *NOTE*'
system.

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Yet be advised that the Bookmark System is not really a Three-Fingered System. It starts out that way, but in later books we will employ the fourth finger to extend the notes accessible in a single fretboard playing position. The fourth finger will be rhythmically required, and this extended approach permits playing a interval of a fourth on one string without the need for a change of hand position nor fingering. This makes tetra-chords accessible, and permits the next fretboard hand position to be essentially identical to the first hand position. In addition, melody or scalar passages will yield up alternate ways to play without a change of hand position, and a number of chordal and harmonic methods will be presented, all within this one extended hand position.

What if you're a teacher who just can't stand teaching three fingers?

There is an easy way to adapt all the fingering charts which follow into a classical 'four-finger' system.

In charts within this book, after introducing the notes by name, you will see 'Traktor's Finger Symbols' indicating fingering by fingers one, two, and three.

If you feel that your student should learn 'four-fingered' fingering, then just have the student use finger four instead of finger three in all of the charts in this book. This will lead to the basic muscular expression of the four-fingered classical approach with very little lost. The student will still be learning an octave of notes falling identically beneath the two hands, and the hands can be trained together.

In later books, where we show how to make fingering more fluid, you will need to adapt because your student hasn't really learned 'one finger per note.'

However, the classical method is a good method, and if you prefer to teach that fingering then the Bookmark System adapted so will still be highly effective at training the student to learn simply, and to play good music rather quickly.

Blank charts are provided in this book for your use in notating fingering as you choose.

Traktor's Finger Symbols ...

Finger #1 = Circle ●
Finger #2 = Bar ▮
Finger #3 = Down Triangle ▼
Finger #4 = X ✖

A hollow symbol identifies the root of the scale or chord.
Like this: ○ ▯ ▽ or ⊗.

Note to Everybody Else: What Does 'Pedagogy' Mean?

Here's the definition —

ped a go gy (pµd"…-g½"j¶)

The art or profession of teaching. The technique of presenting material to be learned. The word derives from French *pédagogie*, which comes from Old French, which comes from Greek *paidag½gia*, which comes from the noun *paidag½gos*, a slave who took children to and from school! (So be kind to your teacher! He is slaving away in your benefit!)

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About Mobius Megatar

Mobius Megatar is an instrument manufacturer. Our company was created for the purpose of bringing more music and more 'tappistry' into the world.

'Tappistry', *noun*, the artistry of tapping on strings in order to make music, thus making simultaneous two-handed play possible on guitar-like instruments.

Who are we? We're engineers and we're musicians. We like music, and we like the two-handed touch-style method. And we think that lots of other musicians would like two-handed tapping, if only it were a little easier to play, a little more affordable, and a little better known.

So that's given us our mission: Make a great tapping instrument, designed to be easy to play, designed to be affordable, and place it in musicians' hands all around the world.

Mobius Products

Mobius Megatar manufactures a line of specialty tapping basses, along with special pickup arrays to customize the sound, and requisite accessories such as strings and cases and instructional material, of which this is the first book of a series.

You can find detailed information about our products on the web at http://www.megatar.com

How to Contact Mobius Megatar

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(415) 435-8803

US Fax Number —
(415) 453-1485

US Office Hours —
9am—5pm Monday-Friday,
Pacific Standard Time

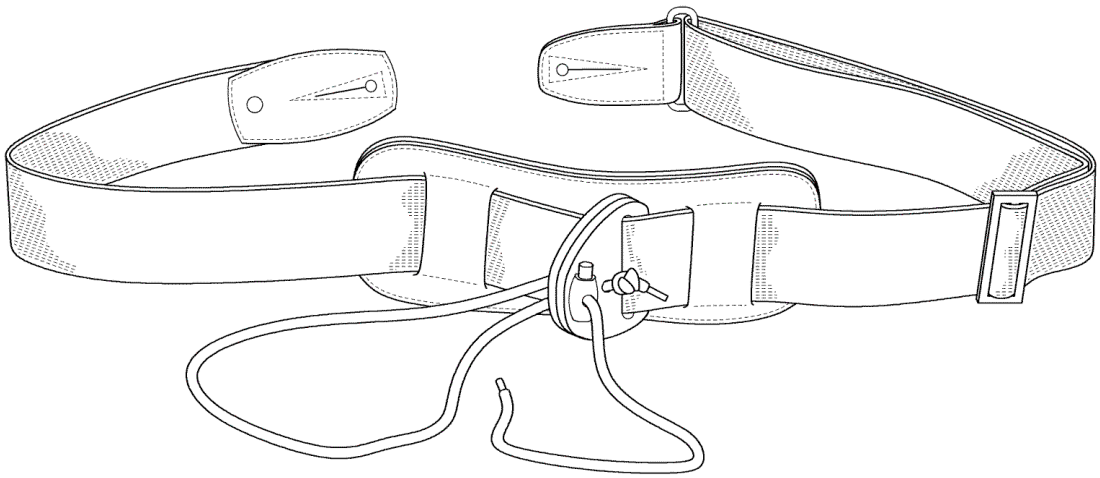
Traktor's Finger Symbols

Graphs in this book were produced by superimposing an (invisible) table to contain the finger-symbols over another (visible but empty) table whose lines represent the strings and frets.

For the finger-symbols themselves we created a true-type font called TrakBats™ using Macromedia's Fontographer program.

Then one simply types TrakBat symbols into the (invisible) table cells. The invisible table is offset slightly from the underlying visible table so that symbols automatically center themselves upon the 'string' line between two 'fret' lines. TrakBats are easy to use because the symbol for first finger is under your first finger on each hand as you type, the symbol for second finger beneath your second finger, etc. Using the shift-key makes the symbol hollow to show a chord or scale's root.

Traktor's Finger Symbols and the TrakBats font are available free of copyright restriction for anyone who wishes to use them. Find them at:
http://www.megatar.com/trakbats/



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Mobius Megatar Instruments and Accessories

Mobius manufactures several models of specialty tapping basses, as well as a line of accessories.

The "TrueTapper" Series

These models bring a new standard of value to the world of Touch-Style play. Blonde in color, built of maple and alder, a TrueTapper typically has one pickup for the melody strings, and a separate pickup for the bass strings. Various pickups available. Separate tone controls to provide a bright and clear voice suitable for many types of music.

The "MaxTapper" Series

The professional choice for warm tone! The MaxTapper is made of premium dark wood, and comes standard with Graph Tech custom nut and bridge saddles of charcoal-colored 'String Saver' material. This patented exotic material extends sustain, keeps strings in tune longer, and reduces string breakage during the gig. The MaxTapper has either two or four premium Bartolini pickups for the quality sound of warmth & power.

The "ToneWeaver"

This bass of premium dark wood is built using the 'fanned-fret' system licensed from its inventor Ralph Novak. By arranging the frets on a slant, the bass strings are made longer and the melody strings are made shorter. As your ear will tell you, the natural result is deeper lows with power and character, and clearer highs with definition and authority. Oddly enough, these slanted frets feel almost the same to your hands, and the learning curve is minimal. The ToneWeaver normally comes with four switch-selectable Bartolini pickups, Graph Tech nut and saddles, and great tone!

The Buzz Feiten Intonation System

Included with all Mobius instruments is the amazing system patented by studio whiz Buzz Feiten. By means of a careful set of offsets to the nut and bridge saddles — completely different from normal industry practice — the entire instrument sounds more in tune to your ear. For an instrument that covers the wide range of both bass and guitar, this is important. When you sound more in tune, you just sound better!

The MegStrap

Included with any Mobius instrument is our new design of guitar strap called the 'MegStrap'. As you can see in the illustration earlier in this book, the MegStrap holds your instrument in an upright and comfortable position so that your hands fall easily and naturally upon the fretboard for two-handed touch-style play.

The MegHook

The convenience of a *removable* belt-hook! Just attach the belthook to the rear of your megatar instrument, and then slip the wide hook portion over your belt to support your instrument from the belt. You can use the belthook by itself if you keep your hands on the neck of the instrument, or use it in combination with your MegStrap, to eliminate any lateral (side to side) motion if you get to dancing around.

The MegBar

Like to play seated? The MegBar attaches to the rear of your megatar, and provides a 'cross-bar' to either side of the instrument's body. This form-fitting cross-bar can rest comfortably on your thighs while playing seated. It can be used by itself, or in combination with your MegStrap.

Carrying and Shipping Cases

ReUnion Blues has the reputation of building the best gigbags in the world. The Mobius custom 'SofCase' is specifically designed for your instrument, with handles, back-pack straps, and an upright 'safety position' carrying handle. Comes with large pocket, and heavy padding.

The TKL company, using patented processes, builds the Mobius custom 'FliteLite' hardcase for maximum protection, even with the airlines. The shell is precision molded from custom extruded resin compounds, with aluminum edging and steel locks. Tough, high-tech protection.

Alternate Pickup-Arrays

A number of alternate pickups are available to personalize your instrument to your taste and to the music you play. This upgrade is easiest done when instrument is purchased, either direct from factory or ordered through your local music store. See our website for current selection.

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Black-Nosed Buddha

There is a story, we don't know if it is true, that a certain Buddhist nun lived as did many others in a tent in a meadow behind the monastery.

Each morning and evening, she burned incense before her small idol of the Buddha, as she prayed and contemplated.

One evening, she noticed that the breeze was carrying the smoke from her incense off to the side and was in fact causing the incense smoke to flow over the Buddha of the nun in the next tent. Our nun realized that her own Buddha was not getting the benefit of her incense, and this disturbed the perfect tranquility of her mind.

The next day, finding a bit of metal foil discarded during repairs to the monastery roof, she had a brilliant idea, and that evening before she lit her incense, she fashioned from the foil a type of cone which funneled the incense smoke direct to the nose of her Buddha.

This quickly blackened the nose of her Buddha, and made it especially ugly.

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